Mar. 28, 1988

THE NEW YORKER

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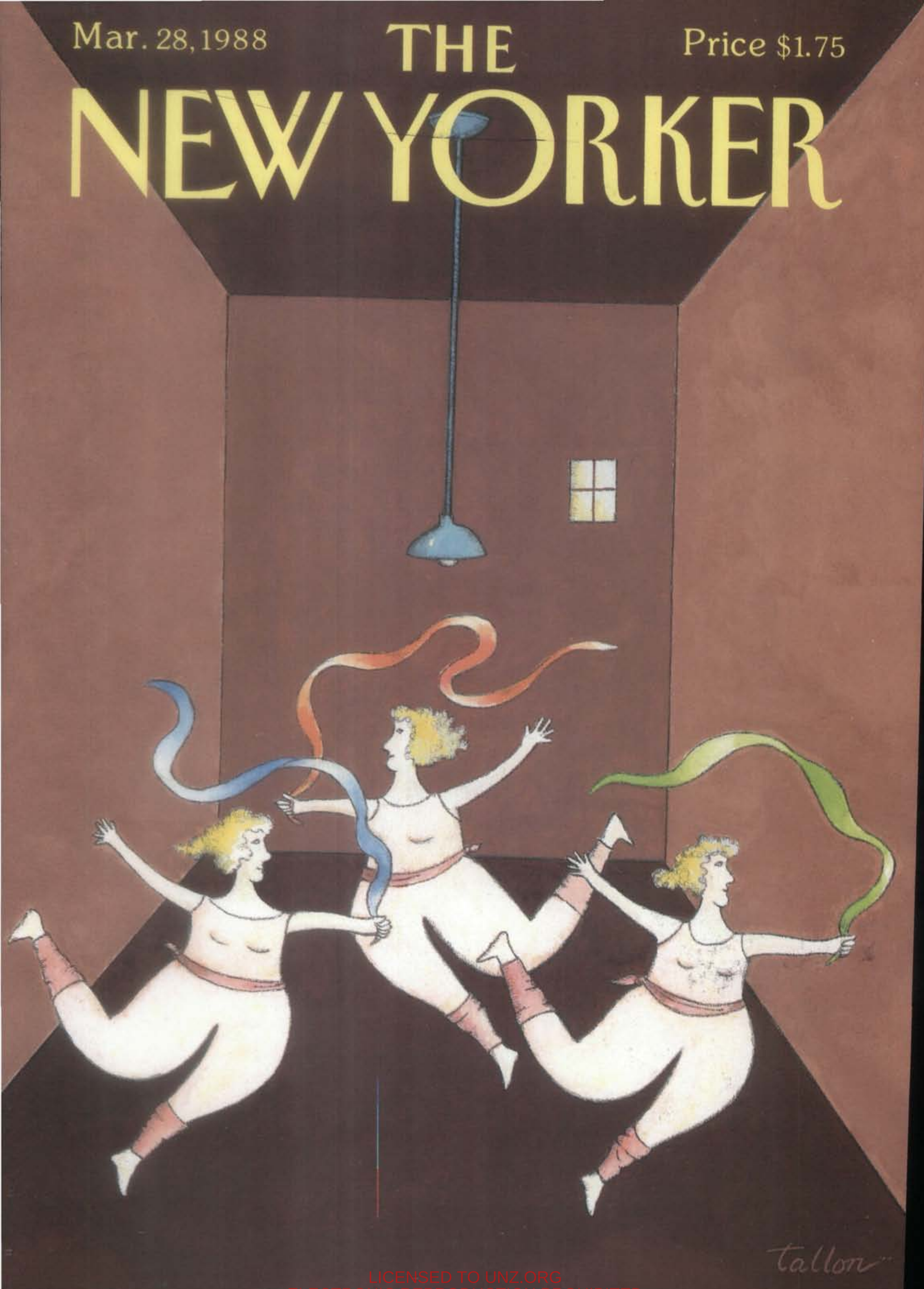

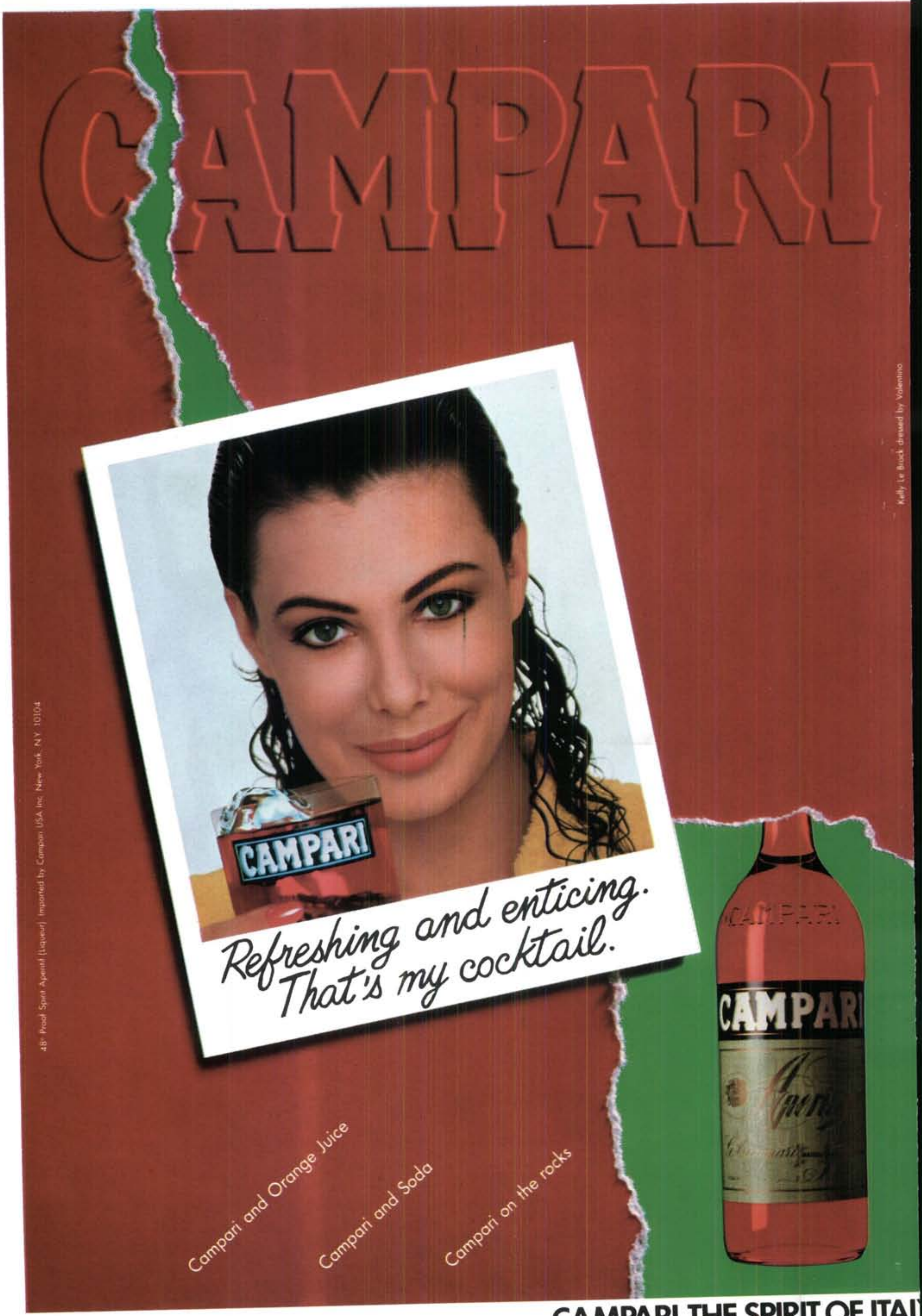
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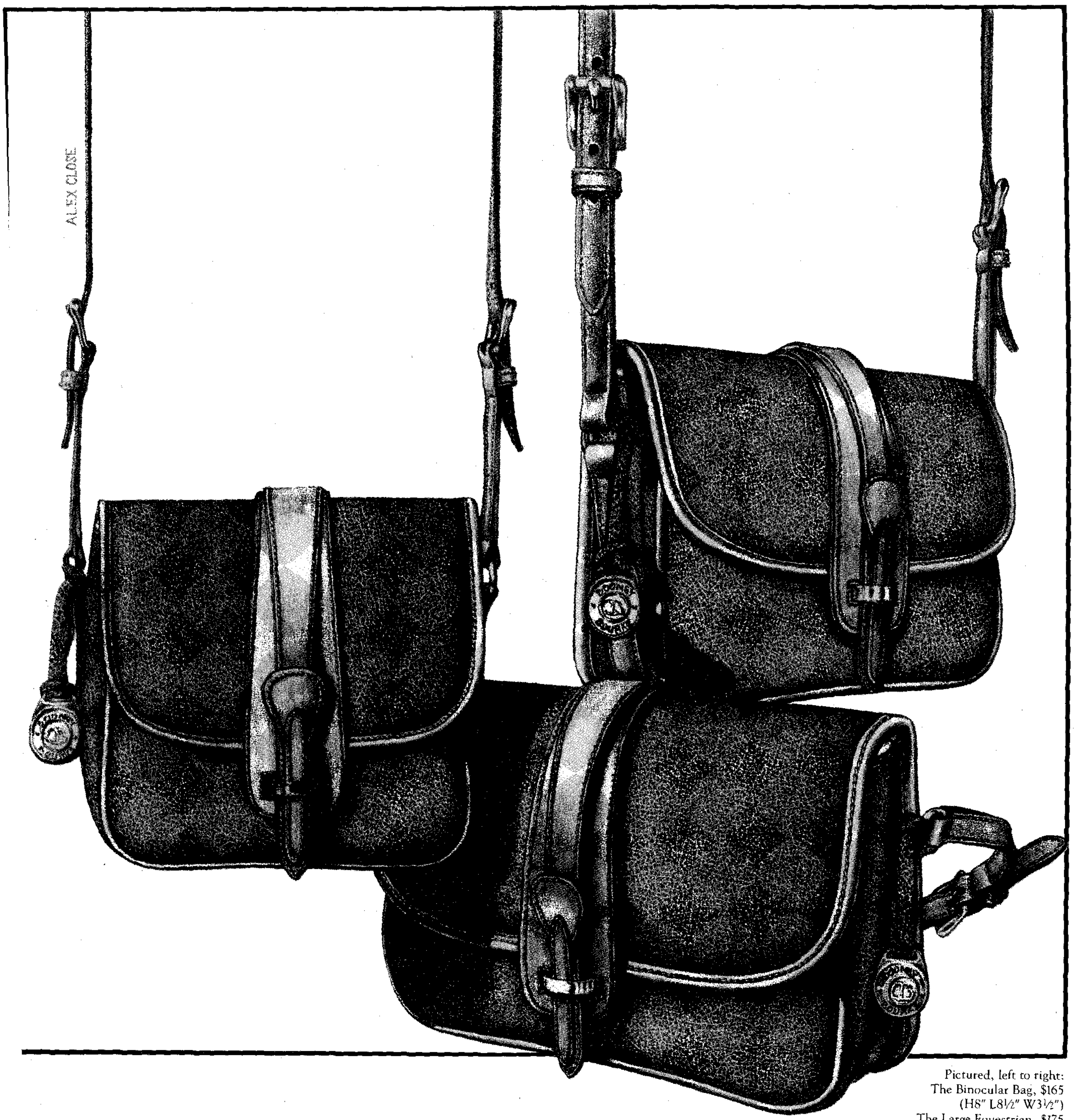

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

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THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Anything Goes—Under the clever direction of Jerry Zaks, this exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The libretto, as revised from the original by Timothy Crouse and John Weidman, is consistently entertaining. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPone, Anthony Heald, and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/2/87.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Boys' Life—Directed by W. H. Macy, Howard Korder's engrossing new play is an eminently quotable postmodern comedy of manners that makes an intelligent contribution to the dialogue on the battle between the sexes. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2.)

The Boys Next Door—The "boys" are three retarded men and a schizophrenic who, under professional supervision, share an apartment. Tom Griffin's good play, though inevitably touching, is also often very funny, and never sentimental. It is acted to near-perfection by a first-rate company, which includes Christine Estabrook, Josh Mostel, and William Jay. (2/22/88) (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Breaking the Code—Derek Jacobi is accomplished and fascinating as the English mathematician Alan Turing, who helped crack the German Enigma code during the war, but Hugh Whitemore's script is more vehicle than play. Michael Gough, Rachel Gurney, and Jenny Agutter are among the good supporting actors. Clifford Williams was the director. (11/30/87) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Burn This—Lanford Wilson's play can be considered an occasion for an astonishing performance by John Malkovich, as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. The supporting actors—Joan Allen, Jonathan Hogan, and Lou Liberatore—are also good. Marshall W. Mason was the director, and the distinguished setting was designed by John Lee Beatty and lighted by Dennis Parichy. (10/26/87) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Cabaret—This tasteful revival of the 1966 musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb (directed by Harold Prince) has a gloriously muted Joel Grey re-creating his role as the Emcee and a sterling performance by Alyson Reed, who plays Sally Bowles as she was always meant to be played. (11/2/87) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 869-0550. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Cherry Orchard—Even the fine performances of Erland Josephson as wistful, hapless Gaev and Željko Ivanek as scruffy, passionate Trofimov cannot shed light on Peter Brook's opaque production of Chekhov's masterpiece. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., about a block east of Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2. Closes Sunday, April 10.)

Equity Library Theatre—A revival of LEAVE IT TO ME, Cole Porter's 1938 musical, is the sixth in this season's series of eight productions. (Equity Library Theatre, 103rd St. and Riverside Dr. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Sunday, April 3. For information about tickets, for which contributions are requested, call 663-2028.)

Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune—Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue in the Fifties. Kathy Bates and Kenneth Welsh are remarkable, under the direction of Paul Benedict. (11/9/87) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Gospel at Colonus—A revival of the 1983 musical by Bob Telson (score) and Lee Breuer (book and lyrics). With Morgan Freeman, Clarence Fountain and the Five Blind Boys of Alabama, J. J. Farley and the Soul Stirrers, and the J. D. Steel Singers. Directed by Mr. Breuer. Previews Tuesday and Wednesday, March 22-23. Opens officially on Thursday, March 24. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 575-9200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:30. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

The Great Hunger—A play by Tom MacIntyre. Presented by the Abbey Theatre of Ireland. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Saturday at 2 and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, March 27.)

Into the Woods—The new musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The amusing first half is like a musical staging of Bruno Bettelheim's "The Uses of Enchantment." The rather nasty second half degenerates into cheap philosophy. The costumes (by Ann Hould-Ward) and sets (by Tony Straiges) are pretty to look at, and the songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. The superb cast, led by Bernadette Peters and Joanna Gleason, is directed by Mr. Lapine. (11/16/87) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Joe Turner's Come and Gone—A new play by August Wilson, directed by Lloyd Richards. Previews through Saturday, March 26. Opens officially on Sunday, March 27. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night cur-

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tain at 6:30. Matinées Wednesdays at 3 and Saturdays at 2.)

Julius Caesar—The second entry in the Public's Shakespeare Marathon, this production, under Stuart Vaughan's direction, is always clear, always absorbing. Edward Herrmann's Cassius is so strong that he seems to dominate the action, and Martin Sheen makes a fine Brutus. With John McMartin, Joan MacIntosh, and Al Pacino, among others. (Reviewed in this issue.) Opens Tuesday, March 22, and will run through Sunday, April 3. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8; opening-night curtain at 6:45. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

M. Butterfly—John Lithgow and B. D. Wong in a new play by David Henry Hwang. Directed by John Dexter. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Tuesdays through Saturdays, and Monday, March 28, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—This is as much a celebration of Shakespeare's comedy as a presentation of it, with A. J. Antoon at the helm. The real source of magic lies in the beautiful scenery of Andrew Jackness and the rich, gorgeous score by Michael Ward. (1/25/88) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday at 2, Saturday at 2:30, and Sunday at 3. Special performance for the Equity Fights AIDS Fund on Monday evening, March 21. Closes Sunday, March 27.)

The Music Man—The New York City Opera's lacklustre revival of Meredith Willson's love song to small-town America. With Bob Gunton as a disappointingly colorless Professor Harold Hill. (3/21/88) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, April 10.)

The No-Frills Revue—An unpretentious, jokey little show conceived and directed by Martin Charnin. Most of the lively songs—words and music—were written by Mr. Charnin, and the two funniest sketches were contributed by Thomas Meehan. (2/22/88) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

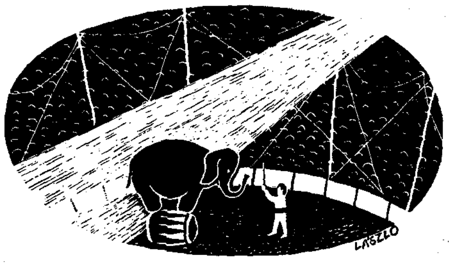
Oba Oba—A Brazilian musical revue, with a company of fifty singers, dancers, and musicians. Previews through Sunday, March 27. Opens officially on Tuesday, March 29. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30; opening-night curtain at 6:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

Oil City Symphony—Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny, very musical musical. Mr. Hardwick and Miss Monk, by the way, are alumni of the beguiling "Pump Boys and Dinettes" of blessed memory. (1/18/88) (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

The Palace of Amateurs—Laura Dern and Kyle MacLachlan in a play by John PiRoman. Directed by Norman René. Preview Tuesday, March 22. Opens officially on Wednesday, March 23. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7; opening-night curtain at 6:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.)

The Phantom of the Opera—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performances by Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman in the leading roles. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Psycho Beach Party—A romp through early-sixties beach-blanket movies, written by Charles Busch and starring Mr. Busch as a Gidget-like figure with a Marnie-like problem. (8/10/87) (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3. Special performance for the Equity Fights AIDS Fund Monday, March 28, at 8.)



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Rashomon—A revival of the 1959 play by Fay and Michael Kanin based on stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa. The cast includes James Saito, Kiya Ann Joyce, and Norris M. Shimabuku. Previews Tuesday evening, March 22, and Wednesday matinée, March 23. Opens officially on Wednesday evening, March 23. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2.)

Sarafina!—This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. It is a show about a show that is put on by a brave group of high-school students in Soweto, and that dramatizes the events in their lives. The events are bleak, but the spirits are blazing and the acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (11/9/87) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Señora Carrar's Rifles—A revival of Bertolt Brecht's 1937 play, with Miriam Colón in the title role. Directed by Alejandro Quintana. Preview Wednesday, March 23. Opens officially on Thursday, March 24. Performances in English Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; in Spanish on Saturdays and Sundays at 2:30 and 8. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

A Shayna Maidel—A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson and is enhanced by two extraordinary performances: one from Gordana Rashovich as a concentration-camp survivor and the other from Paul Sparer as the father who failed to get her and her mother out of Poland. The year 1946 is perfectly evoked by William Barclay's setting. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (11/30/87) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Blythe Danner, as Blanche Du Bois, is not at her best in this Tennessee Williams revival. The production, directed by Nikos Psacharopoulos, features Aidan Quinn as a preppie and petulant Stanley Kowalski. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Tamara—A participatory theatrical encounter, in which the audience must literally follow the characters as they move from room to room in what is supposed to be Gabriele D'Annunzio's villa. Pre-happening cocktails and a buffet at intermission are included in the rather hefty ticket price ($90 to $135). (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. 307-7171. Nightly, except Thursdays, at 8; cocktails at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 2; cocktails at 1:30.)

A Walk in the Woods—Lee Blessing's absorbing play is set near Geneva and consists entirely of the conversations, over a year or so, of an American and a Soviet diplomat who have gone there to negotiate an arms treaty. No agreement is reached, but a friendship grows and deepens. Under the direction of Des McAnuff, Sam Waterston and Robert Prosky give performances as distinguished as the roles themselves. (3/14/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Wenceslas Square—This play by the late Larry Shue, about an American professor and one of his students in Prague in 1974, is insubstantial but, under the imaginative direction of Jerry Zaks, always fascinating, whether funny or sad. Four fine actors appear as the many characters, Czech and American. (3/14/88) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

York Theatre Company—A revival of **lost in the stars**, the Maxwell Anderson–Kurt Weill musical based on Alan Paton's novel "Cry, the Beloved Country." Opens Friday, March 25, and will run through Sunday, April 17. (York Theatre, 2 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Friday, March 25, at 8; Saturday, March 26, at 3 and 8; Sunday, March 27, at 3 and 7; and Tuesday and Wednesday, March 29-30, at 8.)

Long Runs—**broadway bound:** In the third of his trilogy of autobiographical plays, Neil Simon takes us from Brooklyn to Manhattan, from ignominy to the promise of fame. Directed by Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Mondays through Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **cats:** Ezra Pound nicknamed T. S. Eliot "Old Possum," and under that name Eliot wrote a collection of poems about cats; and now the cats are on display on Broadway, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, scenery and costumes by John Napier, and direction by Trevor Nunn (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinée Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show no yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **driving mis daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of th growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 45 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays throug Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays an Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **th fantasticks:** 11,616 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., a Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays throug Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; an Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . **fences:** Billy Dee Williams has the lead i August Wilson's powerful play. Lloy Richards directed. (46th Street Theatre, 22 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Sat urdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Sat urdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **42nd stree** Once upon a time there was a silly-wonderfu Warner Brothers musical about a youn hoofer who goes on in place of a disabled sta and herself becomes a star overnight. Th legitimate musical that has been fashione from the movie musical is just as silly but b *no means* as wonderful. (St. James, 246 W 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Satu days at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Sa urdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **me an my girl:** A fifty-year-old British musical sta

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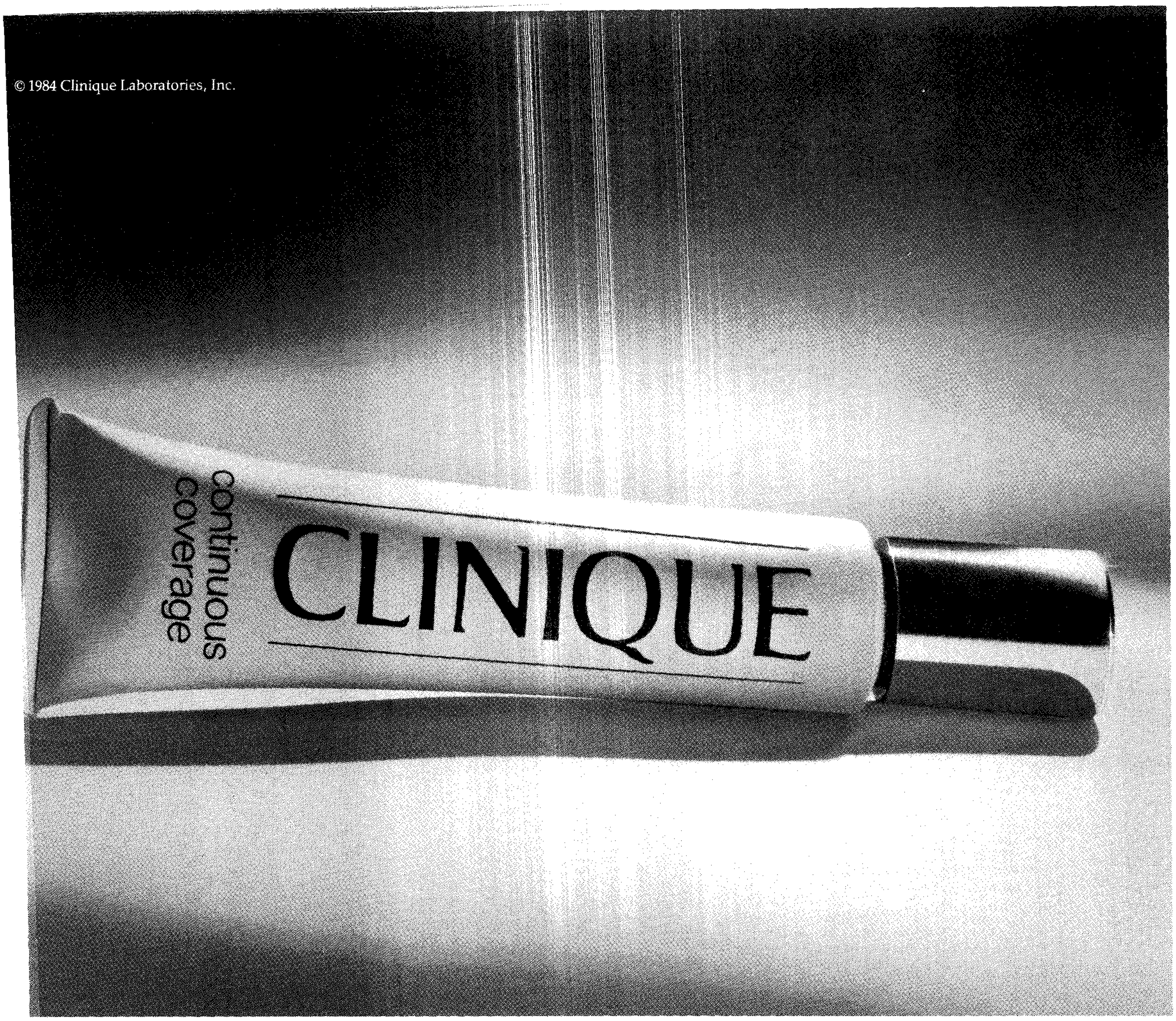

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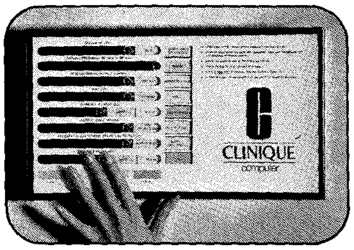

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ring Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Gary Morris and Anthony Crivello star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.) . . . **THE NERD:** This farce by Larry Shue is a source of laughter from beginning to end. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

THE CIRCUS—Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's hundred-and-eighteenth edition opens Wednesday, March 23, and will run through Sunday, May 1. (Madison Square Garden. For information about show times and tickets, call 563-8300.)

BITTERSUITE—A pleasant revue of songs about middle age by Elliot Weiss (music) and Michael Champagne (lyrics). (Palsson's Supper Club, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 5:30 and 8.)

LIGHT OPERA OF MANHATTAN—Presenting **THE DESERT SONG,** by Sigmund Romberg. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30.)

LILIANE MONTEVECCHI ON THE BOULEVARD—A one-woman show. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Nightly, except Tuesdays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 5. Closes Sunday, April 3.)

ODD JOBBERS—A fifty-minute show written and performed by Michael Heintzman, Terry Hempleman, and Marguerite Kuhn. A presentation of the Lunchtime Humorists Series. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 247-0393. Thursdays and Fridays at 1.)

OPERA ENSEMBLE OF NEW YORK—Final performances of a revival of **A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC,** Stephen Sondheim's 1973 musical. Staged by John J. D. Sheehan. (Lillie Blake School Theatre, 45 E. 81st St. Wednesday and Friday at 8, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, March 27. For information about tickets, call 288-1485.)

TRIBUTE TO FREDERICK LOEWE—With Julie Andrews, Richard Harris, Robert Goulet, Kitty Carlisle Hart, and others. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. Monday, March 28, at 1. No tickets necessary.)

DANCE

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY—Final performances of the engagement—Tuesday through Thursday, March 22-24, at 8: "Doubles," "Eleven," and "Grange Eve." . . . ¶ Friday, March 25, at 8; Saturday, March 26, at 2 and 8; and Sunday, March 27, at 2: "Rain-Forest," "Fabrications," and "Carousal." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

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LAR LUBOVITCH DANCE COMPANY—Tuesday through Thursday, March 22-24, at 8: "Musette," "A Brahms Symphony," and "Cavalcade." . . . ¶ Friday, March 25, at 8, and Sunday, March 27, at 3: "North Star," "Concerto Six Twenty-Two" (with the Solisti New York Chamber Orchestra, Ransom Wilson conducting), and "A Brahms Symphony." . . . ¶ Saturday, March 26, at 2 and 8: "Musette," "Of My Soul," and "Concerto Six Twenty-Two." With Solisti New York. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 246-8989.)

JUILLIARD DANCE ENSEMBLE—Benefit performances of new and repertory works. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Friday and Saturday, March 25-26, at 8; Sunday, March 27, at 3; and Monday, March 28, at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-7515.)

NIGHT LIFE

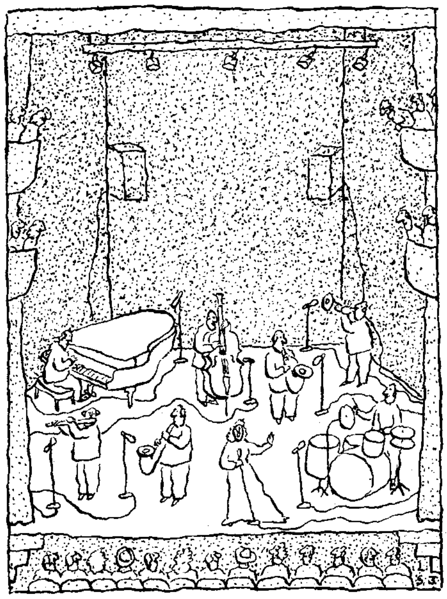
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute changes; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**ANDREA MARCOVICCI** sings in the woody nook known as the Oak Room at nine-fifteen on Tuesday, March 22, and at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen Wednesday through Saturday, March 23-26. Dining.

ANGRY SQUIRE, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautically appointed bar and restaurant. Any swaying you may notice yourself doing is probably generated by the musicians, who perform amidships on a railed-in platform. **BUCKY** and **JOHN PIZZARELLI,** the father-and-son guitar team (they play seven-stringers) whose mutual interests run from Zez Confrey to Chick Corea, will be on hand Friday and Saturday, March 25-26. First set at ten.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A neat-as-a-pin cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. **DAUGHERTY & FIELD,** a song-and-comedy team whose differences (Robin Field, the skinny one, likes to do show tunes and make nutty faces, and Bill Daugherty, the stocky one, likes to do Swing-band numbers and deliver his lines deadpan) are a running joke, perform Wednesday through Saturday, March 23-26, at six-thirty. **JIM MORRIS,** a takeoff artist who is probably best known for his ability to simulate the thought processes and speech patterns of Ronald Reagan, is here at nine Tuesdays through Saturdays, doing impressions of all the guys in the race for Reagan's seat.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A bemirrored jazz club with a spectacular piece of neon art on the back wall (the Manhattan skyline and attendant celestial bodies) and with bright clusters of musicians on the dais. **CARMEN MC RAE,** whose way with a lyric sometimes seems stern and analytical and at other times keen and fresh, sings here Tuesday through Sunday, March 22-27; pianist **KENNY BARRON** leads a combo on Monday, March 28; and starting Tuesday, March 29, **CHICK COREA** and **GARY BURTON** play piano-vibraharp duets. Music from nine. Dining.



BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Rock, folk, jazz, comedy, and combinations thereof in a blue-pillared room that seats four hundred. Monday, March 21, the Turtle Island String Quartet, with violinist **DAROL ANGER;** Friday, March 25, the Church, an Australian rock band; Saturday, March 26, ex-Byrd **ROGER MC GUINN;** and Tuesday, March 29, country singer **NANCI GRIFFITH.** Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A real New York bar; it has dark wood panelling, Type A conversationalists, and some very good pianists (who play the very beautiful concert grand that Paul Desmond bequeathed to the proprietor) and bassists. **RICHIE BEIRACH** and **RON MC CLURE** work together through Saturday, March 26; pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY,** tenor saxophonist **CHICO FREEMAN,** and a bassist collaborate on Sunday, March 27; and **FRED HERSCH** and **HARVIE SWARTZ** swing into action on Monday, March 28. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—It's so nice in here—silken woodwork and long tables with pink tablecloths and pink napkins—you might mistake it for a jazz club on a movie set but for the real musicians onstage. **IRENE REID,** a singer who came to notice in 1948 (she wowed an Amateur Night audience at the Apollo) and later toured with the Basie band, sings here Tuesday through Sunday, March 22-27; **CLARK TERRY,** who was with the compact early-fifties model of the Basie band, leads a quartet in support of singer **CARRIE SMITH** starting Tuesday, March 29. On Mondays, **HAMIET BLUIETT,** the bearded baritone voice of the World Saxophone Quartet, directs his Telepathic Big Band. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home, Tuesday through Saturday, March 22-26, to **GEORGE SHEARING,** the English-born pianist, who is famous for his cool, pearly touch and his bons mots. **BOBBY SHORT,** fave rave of *tout le haut monde,* will be in residence starting Tuesday, March 29. Sets at ten and midnight. . . . ¶ Over in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** sings and plays the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

DRUMS, 333 E. 60th St. (308-2333)—A recent addition to clubland. It's elaborately furnished, in swank-disco style; it even has sofas to nap on between sets. The Wild Seeds, an Austin, Texas, rock band, perform on Monday, March 21. On Friday, March 25, the Royal Crescent Mob, an Ohio quartet that specializes in James Brown-style funk, shares the bill with **MERCY SEAT,** a Violent Femmes offshoot that mixes gospel sentiments with speedy rock. Doors open at nine-thirty.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—A red-velvet-and-mirror-walled lai for jazz people and former Motown divas. **MARY WILSON,** who sang and shimmied with th Supremes from beginning to end and recentl wrote a book all about it, will be aroun Tuesday through Sunday, March 22-27; **SCOT HAMILTON,** a thirty-three-year-old tenor saxophonist whose big, sumptuous tone send some listeners into Swing-time reveries brings in his quintet on Tuesday, March 29 Mondays remain in the hands of guitarist **LE PAUL.** Music from eight. Dining.

GREENE STREET, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—A cathedral-size bar and restaurant. Pianist practice their art in a little grove of palms half mile or so from the bar. Bring your binoculars. The schedule: Tuesday and Wednesday, March 22-23, **MICHAEL WEISS;** Thursda through Saturday, March 24-26, Lynn Bernstein (with bassist **CALVIN HILL** on Friday an Saturday); and Tuesday through Thursday March 29-31, **HAL SCHAEFER.** Sets begin a seven Tuesdays through Thursdays, and a seven-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Close Mondays.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—A room with a view (of Broadway) and with jazz (mostly of the mainstream type). **DICK HYMAN,** who has Jelly Roll Morton and James P. Johnson and a library of pop songs at his fingertips, performs on Monday, March 21. The rest of the lineup: Tuesday, March 22, pianist Virg Dzurinko; Wednesdays, March 23 and 30, pianist Roy Meriwether's trio; Thursday, March 24, the Gerard D'Angelo trio; Friday, March 25, singer-pianist **RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT;** and Saturday, March 26, clarinettist **KEN PEPLOWSKI'S** trio. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

JAN WALLMAN'S, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A room fit for a singer, an accompanist or two, and a party of forty-eight. Yvonne Constant, a Paris-born chanteuse, sings Tuesday through Thursday, March 22-24; **BARBARA LEA,** a clear, unmannered, often lovely singer, is a Friday-night tradition; and on Monday, March 28, **BOB STEWART** will do a program of songs that singers such as Peggy Lee and Blossom Dearie have made their own. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant, low-key bar and restaurant in the piano-bass district. **JOHN BUNCH** and **PHIL FLANIGAN,** two-fifths of Scott Hamilton's quintet, swing it Tuesday through Saturday, March 22-26; **ROLAND HANNA** and **STAFFORD JAMES** will be on duty starting Tuesday, March 29. First set at nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music and performing space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. **RASHIED ALI,** who served as John Coltrane's drummer during the Master's experimental period and later ran a SoHo jazz spa called Ali's Alley, leads a quartet on Mondays; folk guitarist Peppino D'Agostino plays on Tuesday, March 22; alto saxophonist **CARLOS WARD** brings in a quartet on Thursday, March 24; **ARTO LINDSAY,** a guitarist of the downtown anti-melodic camp, will be here with some friends on Friday, March 25; and on Saturday and Sunday, March 26-27, harmolodic funk guitarist **JAMES (BLOOD) ULMER** has the floor. Music after nine.

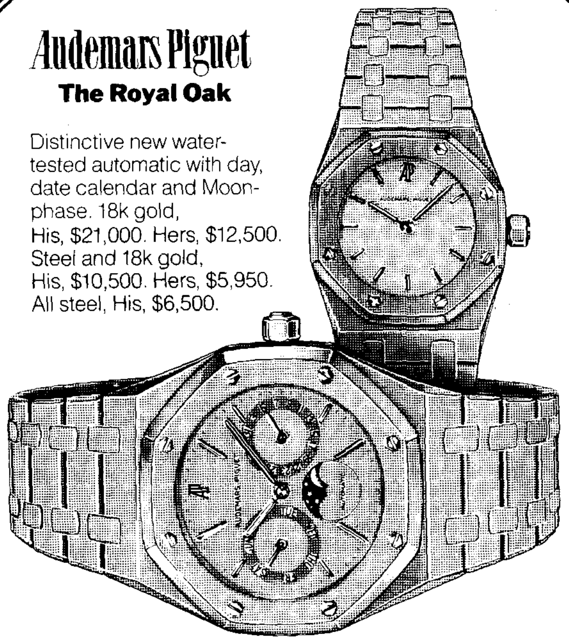
.ONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Scary-movie buffs like the epic-size iguana on the roof; Texans like the reminders of home; and musicians like the Texans, the New Yorkers, and the other visitors from this planet who regularly fill the joint up. Monday, March 21, Chicago bluesmen **SON SEALS** and **LONNIE BROOKS;** Tuesday, March 22, Texas-bred bluesman **JOHNNY COPELAND;** Thursday, March 24, **RICK DANKO** and **ELLIOTT MURPHY;** Friday, March 25, the **SUN RHYTHM SECTION,** a Memphis sextet made up of some Dawn of Rock and Roll pros; and Saturday, March 26, Commander Cody's band. Music after nine. Dining.

ICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and their high-heeled foxes. **RUTH BROWN,** an R. & B. star in the fifties and the R. & B. d.j. Motormouth Maybell in John Waters' new movie "Hairspray," sings at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

IKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—Jazz and jazz-enriched music (jazz-rock, Latin jazz, jazz-funk) to eat and drink by. **ART BLAKEY,** all hard-bop drive and muscle, leads his youthful crew of **JAZZ MESSENGERS** on Friday and Saturday, March 25-26. Music from about ten until two.

TZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock and roll of the Present Moment—and, occasionally, of the Classical Era (the fifties), the Romantic Era (the sixties), and the OPEC Era (the seventies)—in a big, fancy thirties-era ballroom. On Tuesday, March 22, an Ivory Coast polyglot reggae-ist named **ALPHA BLONDY** sings with his band, the Solar System; on Friday, March 25, it's Men Without Hats. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

UNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A musical melting pot: samba bands, African pop bands, reggae people, zydeco outfits, and salsa ensembles all pass through this former luncheonette. Tuesday



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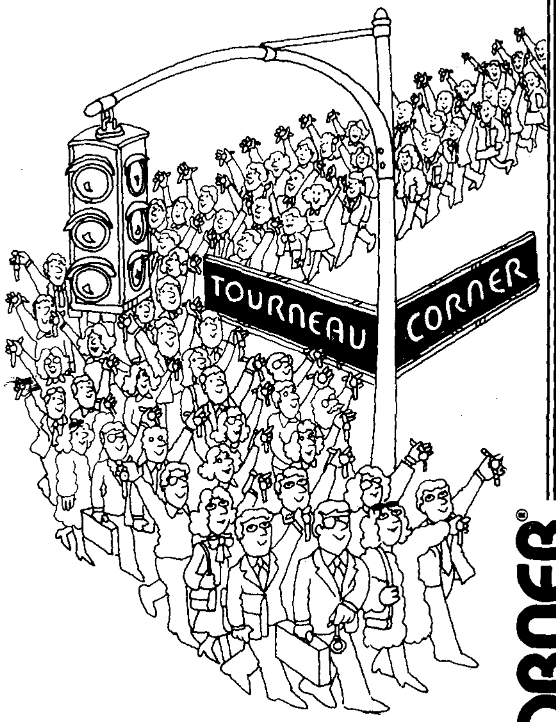

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through Thursday, March 22-24, Brazilian pop-jazz singer **ASTRUD GILBERTO**; Friday, March 25, the Haitian dance band **TABOU COMBO**; Saturday, March 26, **PÉ-DE-BOI**; Tuesday, March 29, Ibrahima's World Beat, a fourteen-piece ensemble led by a Senegalese drummer and dancer named Ibrahima Camera; and Wednesday and Thursday, March 30-31, the **BHUNDU BOYS**, a Zimbabwean pop band. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Speakeasy, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—The site, many moons ago, of Rienzi's, a coffee-house on the beaten path; nowadays, it's home to folkies, blues people, bluegrass fiddlers, lonesome cowboys, and a stray rock person or two. **DAVE VAN RONK**, a blues-loving New York folkie who has been roaming this neighborhood for thirty years, holds forth on Saturday, March 26. Music from about eight-thirty. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A knotty-pine-and-brick-walled *boîte*, crowded with jazz fans from Japan, France, Germany, Denmark, Greenwich Village, and other countries. The **JAZZTET**, a sextet founded in the hard-bop fifties by **BENNY GOLSON** and Art Farmer and revived (after a twenty-year lapse) in the revivalist eighties, performs Tuesdays through Sundays. **TERENCE BLANCHARD**, a young back-to-bop trumpeter from New Orleans, fills in for Farmer. Brazilian pianist **ELIANE ELIAS** leads a trio on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

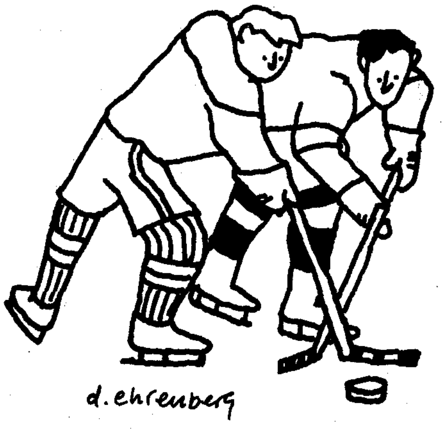
Tramps, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—A simple, no-frills blues and rock club attached to an Irish pub. The **SURREAL MC COYS**, a local country band, call this place home on Mondays. The **CUCUMBERS**, a rock quartet (three boys, one girl) from Hoboken, perform on Friday, March 25; they do a bouncy, funny song about treating babies gently ("Hey, can you remember when you were a softhead?") and one (sung by Deena Shoshkes, who has a little, flirty, countryish voice) about lazy but lovable boyfriends. Music after nine-thirty.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—A bi-level operation. In the downstairs room, which is as big and unbeautiful as a mess hall, a quintet run by drummer **TONY WILLIAMS** alternates with a quartet led by violinist **JOHN BLAKE**. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesday through Saturday, March 22-26. Mondays are set aside for salsa bands. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the Terrace Bar, pianist-singer **BROOKS KERR** and bassist **BOB FIELD** are on duty from ten Tuesday through Sunday, March 22-27; **JUNIOR MANCE** and **MARTY RIVERA** go to work on Tuesday, March 29. On Tuesdays, the visiting duo trades sets with jazz harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN'S** trio.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Perhaps the most famous basement in the world, now in its second half century, this establishment has been described by Max Gordon, the wise, elfin, cigar-smoking proprietor, as "a good joint that people like to come to—thank God." Vibraphonist **BOBBY HUTCHERSON** directs a quartet Tuesday through Sunday, March 22-27; **ILLINOIS JACQUET**, the Texas tenor whose name alone suggests coattails flying, will be out in front of his sixteen-piece swing band starting Tuesday, March 29. Mondays are reserved for the **MEL LEWIS** big band. Music after ten.

West End, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Those who can resist the temptations of the large barroom here—pinball, video games, a dialogue with a budding logical positivist from Columbia U.—will find another, smaller room, where jazz musicians hold sway. **MICHELLE HENDRICKS**, daughter of bop vocalist Jon Hendricks, *sings with pianist* David Leonhardt's trio Wednesday through Sunday, March 23-27; saxophonist **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** moves in with his quintet on Wednesday, March 30. Music from about nine. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A bright, *spacious, lightly forested bar and restaurant* with an in-between room from which music issues, putting an end to some discussions and inspiring others. Pianist **JANE JARVIS**, who used to play the organ for cheering thousands at Shea Stadium, works with bassist **JACK LESBERG** through Saturday, March 26, and with buzzing, humming bassist **MAJOR HOLLEY** starting Monday, March 28. Sundays are claimed by guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE**. Music from eight weeknights, and from seven on Sundays.



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JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Bill Obrecht—With the Manhattan Marimba Quartet, Jed Distler, and others. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Monday and Tuesday, March 21-22, at 8.)

Women of the Calabash—La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Monday, March 21, at 9, and Friday and Saturday, March 25-26, at 10.

Cleo Laine and John Dankworth—With the Dankworth Quartet. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Wednesday, March 23, at 8.)

Christine Baczewska and Susan Rawcliffe—Alternative Museum, 17 White St. 966-4444. Wednesday, March 23, at 8.

Paul Winter Consort—Under the starry skies of the Hayden Planetarium. (Central Park W. at 81st St. Thursday, March 24, at 6:30 and 9. For information about tickets, call 769-5600.)

Douglas Dunn and Dancers—The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Thursday through Sunday, March 24-27, at 8:30.

Marty Pottenger—Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. 925-4671. Friday through Sunday, March 25-27, at 8:30. Through Sunday, April 3.

Darvish—Music from Iran. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Paul Motian Trio—Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Saturday, March 26, at 8. No tickets necessary.

Peabo Bryson and Regina Belle—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Saturday, March 26, at 8.

John Stubblefield Quartet—Jazz Center of New York, 380 Lafayette St. 505-5660. Saturday, March 26, at 9 and 10:30.

Walter Thompson Big Band—Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. Tuesday, March 29, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Terence Trent D'Arby—Beacon Theatre. Wednesday, March 30, at 8.

P.S. 122—Thursday, March 24, at 9: Accordion Summit, with Pauline Oliveros, Guy Kluvcesek, Danny Mydlack, and others. . . . ¶ Friday, March 25, at 10, and Saturday and Sunday, March 26-27, at 8: "The Jazz Section," with Dan Froot and Dan Hurlin. Through Sunday, April 3. . . . ¶ Friday through Sunday, March 25-27, at 9: Merian Soto and others. Through Sunday, April 3. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Benefit Concert—With Mel Lewis, Joe Lovano, Roseanna Vitro, Paula Lockheart, the Kenny Werner trio, Tim Berne, and the Soldier Electric String Quartet. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Tuesday, March 22, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Fanny Brennan—Very small surreal paintings. Through April 1. (Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. Open Mondays.)

Susan Crile—Abstract pastels. Through Saturday, March 26. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Luise Kaish—Abstract paintings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Staempfli, 47 E. 77th St.)

Kikuo Saito / Mark Davis—Color-field paintings. / Still-life paintings and drawings. Through April 1. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St. Open Mondays.)

Hunt Slonem—Grisaille paintings housed in old gilt frames and depicting groups of tropical birds and animals. Through April 2. (McCoy, 19 E. 71st St.)

Joan Snyder—Recent paintings, including the twenty-four-foot-long "Morning Requiem (For the Children)," which also makes use of velvet, papier-mâché, and wire. Through April 16. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Pat Steir—New paintings. Through March 31. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Bob Thompson (1937-66)—Figurative paintings. Through April 9. (Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St.)

Group Shows—At the **BABCOCK**, 20 E. 67th St.: *A selection of nineteenth-century* American paintings, including works by Arthur B. Davies, Asher B. Durand, and Louis Eilshemius. Through April 30. (Closes at 4 on Saturdays.) . . . **BERNARD**, 33 E. 74th St.: Fifty-one paintings and drawings that shed new light on the phrase "starving artist." The show is titled "The Artist's Palate," and Francis Bacon's "Side of Beef" and David Hockney's "Strawberry Cake" are on the menu. Through April 9.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Milet Andrejevic—Allegorical paintings in which Greek gods mingle with habitués of Central Park. Through Wednesday, March 30. (Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St.)

Arman—Thirteen paintings to which the artist has affixed a great number of paintbrushes Through April 9. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

George Bellows (1882-1925)—Nearly a hundred lithographs. Through April 2. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)

Jake Berthot—New abstract paintings. Throug Wednesday, March 30. (McKee, 41 E. 57t St.)

Jack Bush (1909-77)—A retrospective of paint ings and works on paper. Through April 2 (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

George Condo—Paintings and drawings Through April 2. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Elizabeth de Cuevas / Roberto Cortazar—Four teen sculptures. / Paintings. Through Apri 16. (Kerr, 37 W. 57th St.)

Martha Diamond—Abstractions from city scapes. Through Saturday, March 26. (Rober Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Gonzalo Fonseca—Sculptures, many of whic incorporate limestone the artist recycled fro demolished New York buildings. Throug April 30. (Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. Ope Mondays.)

Günther Förg—An abstractionist who use painted or cast metal as his canvase Through April 2. (Luhring Augustine Hodes, 41 E. 57th St.)

Leon Goldin—Abstract paintings, not as stric ly geometric as some of his past wor Through April 14. (Kraushaar, 724 Fift Ave., at 57th St.)

Morris Graves—A survey of works on pap dating from 1937 to 1986. Through Satu day, March 26. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Michel Haas—Drawings characterized b figures shaded against a blizzard of sho marks. Through April 9. (Krugier, 41 E. 57th St.)

Minoru Kawabata—Abstract paintings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

Samuel Kornberg—Fifteen surreal paintings and works on paper, many with Biblical or historical references. Through Wednesday, March 23. (Deutsch, 20 W. 57th St.)

Harry Marinsky—Stylized figures in bronze, most of them two or three feet tall. Through Saturday, March 26. (Hammer, 33 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Robert Moskowitz / Ronald Davis—Large-scale figurative paintings and drawings. / Geometric paintings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Meret Oppenheim (1913-86)—Paintings, mostly. Through April 9. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

James Rosati (1912-88) / **Grover Mouton**—Fifty-two sculptures in stone and metal, plus drawings, in this survey, which the artist oversaw before his death last month. / Large-scale expressionistic drawings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Martin Silverman—Large-scale clothed dolls sitting in boats or on trunks, in an installation that reminisces about our immigrant ancestors. Through Wednesday, March 30. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

Janet Stayton and Robert Janz—Paintings. Through April 23. (Heesy, 50 W. 57th St.)

William Turnbull—Recent bronze sculptures. Through April 2. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Robin Utterback—Mixed-medium collages and constructions. Through Saturday, March 26. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Ger van Elk—Painted still-life photographs set in severely angled constructions; the title of one work, "Rietfruitveld," refers to the De Stijl architect Gerrit Rietveld. Through April 1. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

aule Vézelay (1892-1984)—Nonobjective works on paper and minimalist wire-and-thread constructions. Through April 2. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

ane Wilson / Polly Kraft—Land- and seascapes. / Still-lifes. Through Wednesday, March 30. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

hilip Wofford / Luis Cruz Azaceta—Densely painted abstractions. / Drawings. Through April 2. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

lbert York—Landscape, still-life, and figure paintings from the past twenty-five years. Through April 9. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

roup Shows—At **david findlay, jr.,** 41 E. 57th St.: Paintings by Gloucester and Rockport artists working between 1880 and 1975—Gifford Beal, William Paxton, Claire Shuttleworth, and others. Through April 2. . . . **lamagna,** 50 W. 57th St.: Paintings, sculptures, and photographs that have altar motifs as a starting point, by Ana Mendieta, Joseph Beuys, Komar & Melamid, Neil Winokur, and others. Through Saturday, March 26. . . . **galerie lelong,** 20 W. 57th St.: Sculptures, drawings, and photographs by Gordon Matta-Clark (1945-78) and a number of artists in his circle. Through April 16. . . . **midtown,** 11 E. 57th St.: Studies and paintings for WPA-sponsored murals. Artists include Isabel Bishop, Paul Cadmus, and Ben Shahn. Through April 9.

culpture—Works from the sixties (by Richard Artschwager, Donald Judd, Andy Warhol, and others) and the eighties (by Jenny Holzer, Jeff Koons, Allan McCollum, and others). Through Saturday, March 26. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—SoHo

chard Anuszkiewicz—A retrospective of wood constructions and paintings. Through April 16. (Green, 152 Wooster St.)

shley Bickerton—Wall constructions that all bear the motto "Culturelux: The Best in Sensory and Intellectual Experiences." Through April 2. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

ul Bowen—Wood constructions. Through April 16. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

ndro Chia—Paintings and drawings from the past ten years. Through April 5. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

le Chihuly—New glass sculptures, many of which resemble seashells. Through Saturday, March 26. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Dominic Cretara—Paintings of figures in dramatic encounters; for instance, a scene in a confession box, with the penitent's fantasy occupying the top section of the canvas. Through March 31. (McNeil, 96 Greene St.)

Elba Damast / Larry Holmes—A retrospective of paintings and works on paper. / Pastels. Through April 2. (Littlejohn-Smith, 133 Greene St.)

Nassos Daphnis—Large, striking configurations of circles and spheres; the medium is enamel on canvas. Through Saturday, March 26. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Lauren Ewing—Three very large sculptures in which rusted steel plates are juxtaposed with colorful enamel cabinets. Through Saturday, March 26. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

Rafael Ferrer—Paintings of genre scenes in Santo Domingo, where the artist lives about half the year. Through April 6. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Cristos Gianakos—A very large ramp framework made of wood, steel, and glass. Also, abstract paintings on Mylar. Through April 2. (Siegeltuch, 568 Broadway, entrance on Prince St.)

Michael Gitlin—An artist who tames masses of short planks of lumber; in this show, one sculpture wraps around itself, another spills out of the wall. Through Saturday, March 26. (Davis, 568 Broadway. . . . ¶ Stark, at the same address, is showing drawings by Gitlin. Opens at noon.)

Jeff Gompertz—Paintings of imaginary objects, such as a weapon of the future. Through April 2. (Plumb, 81 Greene St.)

Denise Green—Oil paintings and lithographs. Through April 13. (Viafora, 568 Broadway.)

Duncan Hannah—Recent paintings. Through April 6. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

Jan Hashey—Abstract portraits and still-lifes in pastel and oil. Through April 16. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Tom Hatch—Freestanding abstract copper sculptures. Through Saturday, March 26. (Beitzel, 113 Greene St.)

John Hejduk—Colored-pencil drawings of an imaginary city. Through April 9. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Clinton Hill—Constructions and assemblages made of overlapping parts of either handmade paper or painted wood. Through April 7. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

David Ireland—An installation. Through April 16. (Brandt, 568 Broadway.)

Mark Kostabi—Paintings and figurative bronze sculptures. Through April 16. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Jonathan Lasker—Abstractions incorporating grid patterns. Through Saturday, March 26. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

June Leaf—Recent paintings. Through April 16. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Charles Luce / Paul Caranicas—An installation. / Landscapes juxtaposed with paintings of demolished artillery bunkers and other military structures from the world wars. Through Wednesday, March 30. (Schreiber-Cutler, 171 Spring St.)

Clement Meadmore—Recent sculptures. Through April 2. (Ingber, 415 Broadway.)

John Miller—Conceptual works. Through Saturday, March 26. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Frank Moore—A survey of his paintings. Through Saturday, March 26. (Allen, 560 Broadway.)

Olivier Mosset—Two shows of paintings. (Gibson, 568 Broadway. Through Saturday, March 26. . . . ¶ Pretto, 103 Sullivan St. Through April 2. Opens at 1.)

Annette Oko / Sonia Delaunay (1885-1979)—Photo-Realist paintings. / Color lithographs. Through April 30. (Zarre, 379 West Broadway.)

Joyce Robins / Robert Sussman—Rough-textured freestanding geometric bronzes. / Nonobjective paintings. Through April 2. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

Tim Rollins—Eighty framed pages from the first chapter of Kafka's "Amerika," embellished with gold watercolors; a stack of Bibles too high to swear on; and other literary-minded works. Eighteen young students from the South Bronx assisted the artist. Through April 2. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Georges Rousse—A series of large Cibachromes depicting various empty rooms, the walls of which the artist painted red. Through April 2. (Cadot, 470 Broome St.)

David Salle—Recent paintings. Through April 2. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Miriam Schapiro—Figurative paintings. The central work shows three dancers dressed from top hat to tap shoes in multipatterned fabric collage. Through April 12. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

Joel Shapiro—Works on paper. Through March 31. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Judith Shea—Classical figures in cast bronze, marble, and stone. Through Saturday, March 26. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Sandi Slone—Abstract paintings with a gritty texture. Through April 2. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

Ursula von Rydingsvärd—Large-scale sculptures carved in cedar. Through April 30. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway.)

Stephen Whisler—Sculptures. Through April 16. (Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway.)

Robin Winters—Works on paper dating from 1973 to the present. Through April 9. (Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Group Shows—At the **bryers,** 111 Greene St.: A selection of paintings, sculptures, and works on paper which has something to say about the color white; included are works by Donald Lipski, Jasper Johns, and James Hyde. Through April 16. . . . **49th parallel,** 420 West Broadway: Somewhat didactic Canadian and American art that claims to "reactivate" the everyday object. Louise Lawler's Cibachrome prints and Bernie Miller's futuristic installation with found objects are included in this exhibition, part of which was originally mounted at the Power Plant, in Toronto. Through April 9.

Sculpture—Works by a dozen women artists in a show entitled "The Decline of Sexual Stereotypes in Post-Feminist Sculpture." Through April 2. (A.I.R., 63 Crosby St.)

OTHER GALLERIES

Dennis Adams—A wall sculpture entitled "Falling Water." Through Sunday, March 27. (Nature Morte, 204 E. 10th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Cathey Billian—A light-and-glass installation. Through April 9. (Glass Workshop, 142 Mul-

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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berry St. Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Richard Bogart—Romantic landscapes. Through April 2. (Natkin, 395 Broadway.)

Brett De Palma—Twelve figures from Greek and Roman mythology painted on tin. Through March 31. (Briet, 377 Broome St., between Mott and Mulberry Sts. Open Sundays.) . . . ¶ Additional sculptures (using found objects), plus drawings. Through April 16. (Fawbush, 568 Broadway.)

David Diao—New paintings. Through April 10. (Postmasters, 66 Avenue A, near 4th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Rodney Alan Greenblat—Relief paintings depicting the artist's cartoonish characters on various madcap adventures. Through April 3. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 167 Avenue A, at 10th St. Opens daily, except Mondays, at noon.)

Susan Hiller—Two installations, one of which is audiovisual. Through April 17. (Hearn, 735 E. 9th St., just west of Avenue D. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Sundays.)

Mark Schwartz—Abstract Expressionist paintings. Through April 9. (Baum, 109 Hudson St. Open Mondays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Tom Baril and Suzanne Williamson—Black-and-white photographs. Through May 7. (Ledel, 168 Mercer St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Saturdays.)

Cecil Beaton (1904-80)—A two-gallery retrospective of works by the fashion and celebrity photographer. Through April 23. (Fashion Institute of Technology, Shirley Goodman Resource Center, Seventh Ave. at 27th St. Open Tuesday evenings until 9. . . . ¶ Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 to 6:30; Wednesdays, 10 to 8:30; Fridays, 10 to 5; and Saturdays, 1 to 5.)

Margaret Bourke-White (1904-71)—A retrospective of works by the photojournalist who did *Life's* first cover. Through May 1. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Brassaï (1899-1984)—Thirty-three photographs documenting Picasso and his environs from 1932 to 1944; the work is on loan from the Musée Picasso, in Paris. Through April 23. (French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Mondays through Fridays, noon to 6; Saturdays, 10 to 4.)

William Christenberry / Louis De Clercq (1836-1901)—New abstract photographs, plus sculptures and drawings. / Photographs of architectural monuments. Through April 23. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

Grace Knowlton—Photographs, including hand-painted prints of the artist's outdoor sculptures. Through April 2. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

Manual—Works by photographic collaborators Suzanne Bloom and Ed Hill, who fed photographs and texts into a computer, manipulated them with a sophisticated computer-graphics program, and then made these conventional photographs of the resulting video displays. Through Saturday, March 26. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

Lucas Samaras—Photographs. Through April 30. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at noon.)

Joyce Tenneson / Holly Wright—Pale, misty photographs with nudes as the subjects. / A series of photographs entitled "The Flesh." Through April 14. (Pfeifer, 568 Broadway.)

Arthur Tress—Photographs. Through April 16. (Twining, 568 Broadway.)

James Welling—Polaroid photographs. Through April 13. (Burgin, 270 Lafayette St.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Among the fifty-one Dutch and Flemish paintings on loan from the Hermitage will be Rembrandt's "Sacrifice of Isaac," Hals's "Young Man Holding a Glove," and van Dyck's "Family Portrait." Starts Saturday, March 26. . . . ¶ A show of Fragonard paintings and drawings, which has travelled here from the Grand Palais, in Paris. Through May 8. Complementing this is the display of "The Progress of Love" at the Frick Collection (see below). (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—An exhibit of three reconstructed outdoor installations by Vito Acconci that are meant to be climbed through, sat on, whatever. One of them uses a half-dozen formerly abandoned cars. Through May 3. . . . ¶ Drawings by Paul Cézanne taken from five sketchbooks that are on loan from the Kunstmuseum in Basel. Through June 5. . . . ¶ A show of prints scanning the political and social views of more than a hundred artists working in this country during the past twenty-five years, among them Miriam Schapiro, Jane Dickson, Romare Bearden, and Hans Haacke. Through April 19. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A large retrospective of Josef Albers' work will include paintings, objects, and photographs. Starts Friday, March 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—An exhibit of Richard Artschwager's paintings and sculptures from the past twenty-five years. Through April 3. . . . ¶ A Charles Sheeler retrospective offering paintings, drawings, and photographs. Through April 17. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A selection of twenty-five paintings by American artists, representing the works acquired for the museum during the tenure of John I. H. Baur, who was a curator from 1936 to 1952. Starts Wednesday, March 23. . . . ¶ A survey of prints by Alex Katz. Through April 11. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Artifacts from Carthage, including seventeen pictorial mosaics. Through May 1. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—A survey of present-day Scandinavian crafts comprising the work of thirty-five artisans. Through April 24. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A show of ancient terra-cotta objects—toys, fertility figures, reliefs—from South and Southeast Asia. Through May 8. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—A display of Swedish silver covering a three-hundred-and-fifty-year period and including flatware that graced the tables of King Karl Johan and Queen Desideria, Prince Gustav Adolf and Princess Sybilla, and King Carl and Queen Silvia. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—All fourteen canvases of Fragonard's "The Progress of Love" are on view (as usual), complementing the comprehensive show of the artist's work at the Metropolitan. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—An exhibit of works by Leonid Pasternak (1862-1945), the Russian Impressionist painter and the father of Boris Pasternak. Genre scenes, landscapes, still-lifes, and portraits (of, for instance, Lenin, Tolstoy, and Einstein). Through May 22. (Open daily except Fridays and Saturdays. Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—The Drake Manuscript consists of two hundred captioned watercolors of life in the West Indies, thought to be the work of someone on the voyages of Sir Francis Drake. The manuscript is on view along with transparencies of the individual pages. Through May 1. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Bird prints in the library's collection, organized chronologically (1550-1900) and selected so as to show a range both of birds and of print techniques. Through May 7. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5:45.)

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—Paintings, sculptures, photographs, and other works of art by forty-two black artists who live or work in Harlem. Through April 16. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Photographs by Richard S. Roberts documenting black middle-class life in South Carolina in the twenties and thirties. Through April 3. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—Monday, March 21, at 8: "Khovanshchina," with Judith Haddon, Stefania Toczyska, Wieslaw Ochman, and Vladimir Popov; conducted by James Conlon. . . ¶ Tuesday, March 22, at 8: "Così Fan Tutte," with Kiri Te Kanawa, Susan Quittmeyer, David Rendall, and Håkan Hagegård; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, March 23, at 7: "Die Walküre," with Johanna Meier, Sabine Hass, Gail Gilmore, Peter Hofmann, and Theo Adam; James Levine. . . . ¶ Thursday, March 24, at 8: "Les Contes d'Hoffmann," with Gail Dobish, Roberta Alex ander, Martine Dupuy, Placido Domingo, and Simon Estes; Charles Dutoit. . . . ¶ Friday, March 25, at 8: "Lulu," with Catherine Malfitano, Tatiana Troyanos, Ronald Hamilton, and Franz Mazura; James Levine. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 26, at 1:30: "Khovanshchina," with Judith Haddon, Stefania Toczyska, Wieslaw Ochman, and Denés Gulyás; James Conlon. . . . ¶ Saturday, March 26, at 8: "Così Fan Tutte," with Kiri Te Kanawa, Diana Montague, Douglas Ahlstedt, and Brian Schexnayder; James Levine. . . . ¶ Monday, March 28, at 8: "Les Contes d'Hoffmann," with Gail Dobish, Roberta Alexander, Martine Dupuy, Placido Domingo, and Simon Estes; Charles Dutoit. . . . ¶ Tuesday, March 29, at 8: "Lulu," with Catherine Malfitano, Tatiana Troyanos, Ronald Hamilton, and Franz Mazura; James Levine. . . . ¶ Wednesday, March 30, at 8: "Werther," with Frederica von Stade, Dawn Upshaw, Alfredo Kraus, and Richard Stilwell; Jean Fournet. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

Amato Opera—Presenting a new production of "The Magic Flute." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Saturday, March 26, at 7:30, and Sunday, March 27, at 2:30. Through Sunday, April 24.)

After Dinner Opera Company—Presenting three short operas by women composers about Alice, of Wonderland fame. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Ave., at 65th St. Monday, March 28, at 4. For information about free tickets, call 477-6212.)

Opera Orchestra of New York—Eve Queler directing Janáček's "Jenůfa," with Gabriela Beňačková and Leonie Rysanek, sopranos, and Peter Kazaras and Wieslaw Ochman, tenors. (Carnegie Hall. Wednesday, March 30, at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—James Conlon conducting an all-Mahler program, with Ruth Falcon, soprano; Florence Quivar, mezzo-soprano; Timothy Jenkins, tenor; Julian Patrick, bass-baritone; and the Dessoff Symphonic Choir, with the New York Choral Artists. (Avery Fisher Hall. Thursday, March 24, at 8; Friday, March 25, at 2; and Saturday, March 26, at 8.) . . . **note:** On Tuesday, March 29, at 8, Gennady Rozhdestvensky will conduct a benefit concert for the orchestra's pension fund. With Viktoria Postnikova, piano.

Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra—Jesús López-Cobos conducting a Mahler-Schubert program, with Marilyn Horne, mezzo-soprano, and Gary Lakes, tenor. (Carnegie Hall. Friday, March 25, at 8.)

Korean Symphony Orchestra of New York—Kyung-Hum Shim conducting a benefit concert, with Sung-Ju Lee, violin, and Jung-Won Park, soprano. (Alice Tully Hall. Wednesday, March 23, at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducting. (Avery Fisher Hall. Wednesday, March 23, at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Heinz Holliger conducting and playing the oboe. With Syoko Aki, violin; Randall Ellis, oboe; André Emelianoff, cello; John van Buskirk, continuo; and Loren Glickman, bassoon. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Clarion Concerts Orchestra—Newell Jenkins conducting, with Jaap Schröder, violin. (Merkin Concert Hall. Tuesday, March 29, at 8.)

Cincinnati Pops—Erich Kunzel conducting, with William Tritt, piano, and the U.S. Air Force Band Brass Ensemble. With a light show. (Carnegie Hall. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

t. Thomas Choir—Gerre Hancock directing Bach's "St. Matthew Passion." With the Concert Royal and vocal soloists. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30. Admission by contribution.)

mor Artis Chorale and Baroque Orchestra—Johannes Somary directing. With vocal soloists. (Historic Church of St. Jean Baptiste, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. Friday, March 25, at 8. For information about tickets, call 772-9408.)

ttle Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost directing Mozart's C-Minor Mass, with the Metropolitan Singers, the Greek Choral Society, and vocal soloists. (Holy Trinity Cathedral, 319 E. 74th St. 704-0840. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

National Chorale—Martin Josman directing Bach's Mass in B Minor. With Ann Monoyios, soprano; D'Anna Fortunato, mezzo-soprano; Jeffrey Dooley, alto; Robert Guarino, tenor; John Ostendorf, bass; and an orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. Wednesday, March 30, at 7:30.)

RECITALS

Maurizio Pollini—Piano, in an all-Beethoven program. (Carnegie Hall. Monday, March 21, at 8.)

Jessye Norman—Soprano, with James Levine, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. Monday, March 21, at 8.)

Santiago Rodriguez—Piano. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Tuesday, March 22, at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—With Murray Perahia, piano. (Alice Tully Hall. Tuesday, March 22, at 8.)

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau—Baritone, singing lieder. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, March 22, and Thursday, March 24, at 8 and Sunday, March 27, at 4.)

The Art of the Early Keyboard—The third in a series of four concerts featuring Gwendolyn Toth, harpsichord and fortepiano, and guest artists, this one with the Artek Ensemble and devoted to French instrumental music. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Wednesday, March 23, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Harmonie Ensemble—Steven Richman conducting, with Sara Cutler, harp. (Merkin Concert Hall. Thursday, March 24, at 8.)

Amara Ensemble—With Jody Karin Applebaum, soprano; Marc-André Hamelin, piano; and Maureen Gallagher, viola. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Thursday, March 24, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Chamber Players of the League / ISCM—Contemporary chamber music, and a fifty-year-old work by Bartók. With assisting artists. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Thursday, March 24, at 8.)

John Shirley-Quirk and Sara Watkins—Bass-baritone and oboe. (Weill Recital Hall. Friday, March 25, at 8.)

Dmitry Sitkovetsky and Bella Davidovich—Violin and piano, in an all-Brahms program. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum. Friday, March 25, at 8.)

Christopher Parkening—Classical guitarist. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Calliope: A Renaissance Band—An ensemble of five, playing up to forty instruments, including the sackbut and the tambourine. (Merkin Concert Hall. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Grande Bande—In a program devoted to eighteenth-century symphonic styles. Frederick Renz will conduct from the harpsichord. (Alice Tully Hall. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

An die Musik—Chamber music. (Merkin Concert Hall. Sunday, March 27, at 4.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting a Beethoven-Chopin-Mendelssohn program, with Jean-Yves Thibaudet, piano, and artists of the society. (Alice Tully Hall. Sunday, March 27, at 5, and Tuesday, March 29, at 7:30.)

Gidon Kremer and Martha Argerich—Violin and piano. (Carnegie Hall. Sunday, March 27, at 8.)

Ian Hobson—Piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Sunday, March 27, at 8.)

Music from Marlboro—Chamber music. (Alice Tully Hall. Monday, March 28, at 8.)

James Levine and Ken Noda—Duo piano, and piano four hands, in an all-Schubert program. (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum. Monday, March 28, at 8.)

Maria Meirelles—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall. Monday, March 28, at 8.)

Alan Marks—Piano. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Tuesday, March 29, at 8.)

Lise Friedman—Classical guitarist, in a benefit concert. (Weill Recital Hall. Tuesday, March 29, at 8.)

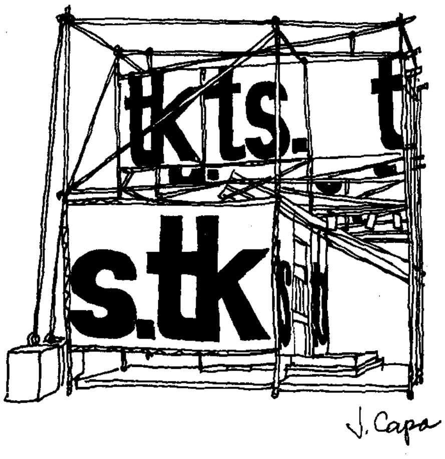
Annie Fischer—Piano, in a Beethoven-Schubert-Brahms program. (Carnegie Hall. Tuesday, March 29, at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Chamber music. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Tuesday, March 29, at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-7515.)

S.E.M. Ensemble—Performing Morton Feldman's "For Philip Guston," a piece that lasts about four hours and fifteen minutes (with no break). (Paula Cooper Gallery, 155 Wooster St. Tuesday, March 29, at 9. For information about tickets, call 674-0766.)

Trio Musica Hispana—In a program of Latin-American and Spanish music. (Weill Recital Hall. Wednesday, March 30, at 8.)

Vladimir Feltsman—Piano, in a benefit concert. With Alexandre Brussilovsky, violin. (Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, 30 W. 68th St. Wednesday, March 30, at 8. For information about tickets, call 679-6122.)



SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for Madison Square Garden is 563-8300, for the Meadowlands 1-201 935-3900, and for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222.)

Basketball—At **byrne meadowlands arena:** Nets vs. Philadelphia 76ers, Tuesday, March 22, at 8. . . . ¶ Nets vs. Boston Celtics, Monday, March 28, at 7:30. . . . **madison square garden:** Knicks vs. Boston Celtics, Saturday, March 26, at 8:30. . . . ¶ Knicks vs. Dallas Mavericks, Monday, March 28, at 7:30.

Hockey—At **madison square garden:** Rangers vs. Buffalo Sabres, Tuesday, March 22, at 7:35. . . . ¶ Rangers vs. Edmonton Oilers, Thursday, March 24, at 7:35. . . . **nassau coliseum:** Islanders vs. Edmonton Oilers, Saturday, March 26, at 7:05. . . . ¶ Islanders vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Tuesday, March 29, at 8:05. . . . **byrne meadowlands arena:** Devils vs. Rangers, Sunday, March 27, at 1:35. . . . ¶ Devils vs. Pittsburgh Penguins, Tuesday, March 29, at 7:45.

Karate—All-American Open Karate Championships. (Felt Forum, Madison Square Garden. Saturday, March 26, at 8.)

Racing—At Aqueduct: Weekdays, except Tuesday, March 22, at 1.

Running—The Haworth Ten-Kilometre Run will start at 11 on Sunday, March 27, at Central Park's East Drive at 69th Street, and finish near the Tavern on the Green.

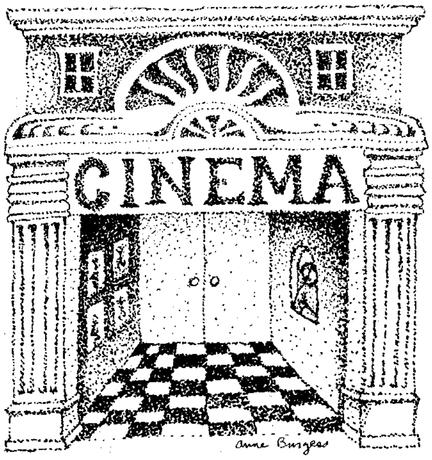
Trotting—At **meadowlands:** Weeknights at 7:30. . . . **yonkers raceway:** Nightly, except Sunday, March 27, at 8; through Tuesday, May 3.

ET ALIA

Poetry, Prose, and Drama Readings—Seamus Heaney reading from his own poetry. (Dia Art Foundation, 155 Mercer St. Wednesday, March 23, at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Albert Innaurato and Paul Selig reading from their own plays. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 427-4410. Monday, March 28, at 8:15.) . . . ¶ Brad Leithauser and Elizabeth Spires reading from their own poetry. (Donnell Library, 20 W. 53rd St. Tuesday, March 29, at 6. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sonia Sanchez, Robert Towers, Lore Segal, Barbara Guest, and Francine du Plessix Gray in a benefit reading for *Columbia* magazine. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. 787-6557. Tuesday, March 29, at 8.)

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 14.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
March 22: At 6, "Marius" (1931; directed by Alexander Korda; in French), with Raimu, Pierre Fresnay, and Orane Démazis; and, at 8:30 and 10:10, "The Tarnished Angels" (1958; Douglas Sirk), with Rock Hudson, Robert Stack, and Dorothy Malone.
March 23-25: At 6, "Fanny" (1932; Marc Allégret; in French), with Raimu, Pierre Fresnay, Orane Démazis, and Charpin; and, at 8:30 and 10:10, "The Tarnished Angels."
March 26: At 3:30, "Angele" (1934; Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Fernandel, Orane Démazis, and Jean Servais; at 6, "Fanny;" and, at 8:30 and 10:10, "The Tarnished Angels."
March 27: At 3:30, "Angele;" at 6, "César" (1936; Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Raimu, Orane Démazis, and Charpin; and, at 8:30 and 10:10, "The Tarnished Angels."
March 29-30: At 6, "César;" and, at 8:30 and 10:10, "The Tarnished Angels."

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through March 29: "Off Limits" (Christopher Crowe), with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines. From March 30: "Beetlejuice" (Tim Burton), with Alec Baldwin, Geena Davis, and Michael Keaton.
Theatre 2: "Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach" (Alan Myerson).
Theatre 3: "Frantic" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"D.O.A." (Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel), with Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through March 24: "Off Limits" (Christopher Crowe), with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines.
From March 25: "Biloxi Blues" (Mike Nichols), with Matthew Broderick.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Moonstruck" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 24: "Vice Versa" (Brian Gilbert), with Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage. From March 25 (tentative): "A New Life" (Alan Alda), with Alda and Ann-Margret.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through March 29: "Frantic" (†).
From March 30: "Beetlejuice" (Tim Burton), with Alec Baldwin, Geena Davis, and Michael Keaton.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through March 24: "Switching Channels" (†).
From March 25: "The Fox and the Hound" (1981), an animated film.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Frantic" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Wall Street" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Stand and Deliver" (Ramon Menendez), with Edward James Olmos and Lou Diamond Phillips.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Moonstruck" (†).
Theatre 2: "Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach" (Alan Myerson).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: "Off Limits" (Christopher Crowe), with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines. From March 25: To be announced.
Theatre 2: "D.O.A." (Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel), with Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan.

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through March 24: "Shoot to Kill" (†).
From March 25: "High Season" (Clare Peploe), with Jacqueline Bisset, James Fox, and Irene Papas.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "Au Revoir les Enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 29: "Good Morning, Vietnam" (†). From March 30: "Night Zoo" (Jean-Claude Lauzon; in French).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Hope and Glory" (†).
Theatre 2: "Little Nikita" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Milagro Beanfield War" (Robert Redford), with Rubén Blades and Richard Bradford.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Hairspray" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dominick and Eugene" (Robert M. Young), with Tom Hulce and Ray Liotta.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Levy and Goliath" (Gérard Oury; in French).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through March 24: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).
From March 25: "A New Life" (Alan Alda), with Alda and Ann-Margret.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through March 24: "Masquerade" (†).
From March 25: "Biloxi Blues" (Mike Nichols), with Matthew Broderick.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach" (Alan Myerson).
Theatre 2: "Vice Versa" (Brian Gilbert), with Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Moonstruck" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 24: "Off Limits" (Christopher Crowe), with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines. From March 25: To be announced.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: "Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh" (directed by Paul Cox).
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: (Separate admissions) "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (†) and "Manon of the Spring" (†). From March 25: (Separate admissions) "Manon of the Spring" (†) and "Jean de Florette" (†).
Theatre 2: March 21: "Magnate" (1987; Filip Bajon; in Polish). March 22: "Train to Hollywood" (1987; Radoslaw Piwowarski; in Polish). March 23: "On the Neman River" (1986; Zbigniew Kuzminski; in Polish). March 24: "The Deserters" (1986; Janusz Majewski; in Polish). From March 25: "Sammy and Rosie Get Laid" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Hairspray" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dominick and Eugene" (Robert M. Young), with Tom Hulce and Ray Liotta.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
"The Last Emperor" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).
Theatre 2: "Stand and Deliver" (Ramon Menendez), with Edward James Olmos and Lou Diamond Phillips.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Little Nikita" (†).
Theatre 2: "School Daze" (Spike Lee).
Theatre 3: "The Dead" (†).
Theatre 4: "Hope and Glory" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: "Masquerade" (†). *From March 25: To be announced.*
Theatre 2: Through March 24: "The House on Carroll Street" (Peter Yates), with Kelly McGillis and Jeff Daniels. From March 25: "Biloxi Blues" (Mike Nichols), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 3: Through March 24: "Shoot to Kill" (†). From March 25: "The Fox and the Hound" (1981), an animated film.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through March 24: "Fatal Attraction" (†).
From March 25: "The Fox and the Hound" (1981), an animated film.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"D.O.A." *(Rocky Morton* and Annabel Jankel), with Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through March 24: "The Dead" (†).
From March 25: "Le Caviar Rouge" (Robert Hossein; in French), with Hossein and Candice Patou.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Last Emperor" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Empire of the Sun" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Two Lives of Mattia Pascal" (Mario Monicelli; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"*Béatrice*" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Broadcast News" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through March 24: Theatre closed.
From March 25: "A New Life" (Alan Alda), with Alda and Ann-Margret.

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: "Girl from Hunan" (Xie Fei and U Lan; in Mandarin). From March 25: "Subway to the Stars" (Carlos Diegues; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese).
Theatre 2: "My Life as a Dog" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 24: "High Tide' (†). From March 25: "Girl from Hunan."

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: "Frida' (1984; Paul Leduc; a Mexican film, in Spanish). From March 25: "High Tide" (†).
Theatre 2: "Babette's Feast" (Gabriel Axel *in Danish and French*).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Shoot to Kill" (†).

Embassy 72nd St. I and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724 6745)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: "Broadcas News" (†). From March 25: "Fatal Attraction" (†).
Theatre 2: "Stars and Bars" (Pat O'Connor with Daniel Day Lewis.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" (†).
Theatre 2: "Masquerade" (†).
Theatre 3: "Stand and Deliver" (Ramon Menendez), with Edward James Olmos and Lou Diamond Phillips.
Theatre 4: "Dominick and Eugene" (Robert M. Young), with Tom Hulce and Ray Liotta.
Theatre 5: "Hairspray" (†).
Theatre 6: "Frantic" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through March 24: "Vice Versa" (Brian Gilbert), with Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage. From March 25: "Biloxi Blues" (Mike Nichols), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 2: "Little Nikita" (†).

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (866-7500)
Through March 24: "Off Limits" (Christopher Crowe), with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines.
From March 25: "Johnny Be Good" (Bud Smith), with Anthony Michael Hall and Robert Downey, Jr.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "D.O.A." (Rocky Morton and Annabel Jankel), with Dennis Quaid and Meg Ryan.
Theatre 2: "Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach" (Alan Myerson).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "The Serpent and the Rainbow" (directed by Wes Craven).
Theatre 2: "Moving" (Alan Metter), with Richard Pryor.
Theatre 3: "School Daze" (Spike Lee).
Theatre 4: "Prison" (Renny Harlin).
Theatre 5: "Little Nikita" (†).
Theatre 6: "Frantic" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"Shoot to Kill" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: Through March 24: "Masquerade" (†). From March 25: "Johnny Be Good" (Bud Smith), with Anthony Michael Hall and Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 3: Through March 24: "Hairspray" (†). From March 25: "Masquerade" (†).
Theatre 4: "Good Morning, Vietnam" (†).

oews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Vice Versa" (Brian Gilbert), with Judge Reinhold and Fred Savage.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
Through March 24: "Action Jackson" (Craig R. Baxley), with Carl Weathers and Craig T. Nelson.
From March 25: "Biloxi Blues" (Mike Nichols), with Matthew Broderick.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Off Limits" (Christopher Crowe), with Willem Dafoe and Gregory Hines.
Theatre 2: "Stand and Deliver" (Ramon Menendez), with Edward James Olmos and Lou Diamond Phillips.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Police Academy 5: Assignment Miami Beach" (Alan Myerson).

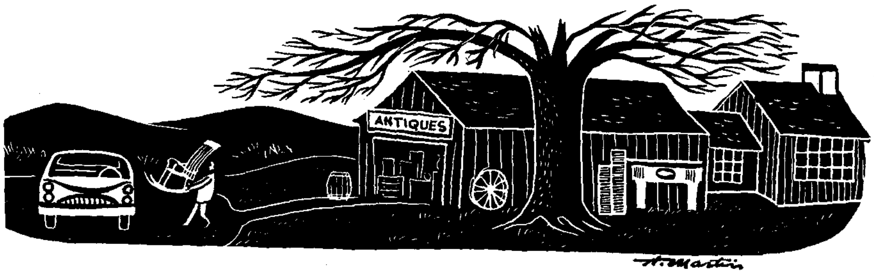
REVIVAL HOUSES

ograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
March 21: "The Best Years of Our Lives" (1946; directed by William Wyler), with Myrna Loy, Fredric March, Teresa Wright, Dana Andrews, Virginia Mayo, and Harold Russell.
March 22-23: "Fashions of 1934" (1934; William Dieterle), with William Powell and Bette Davis; and "One Way Passage" (1932; Tay Garnett), with William Powell and Kay Francis.
March 24-26: "Double Wedding" (1937; Richard Thorpe), with Myrna Loy and William Powell; and "The Thin Man Goes Home" (1945; Richard Thorpe), with Myrna Loy and William Powell.
March 27-28: "Evelyn Prentice" (1934; William Howard), with William Powell and Myrna Loy; and "The Barbarian" (1933; Sam Wood), with Myrna Loy, Ramon Novarro, and C. Aubrey Smith.
March 29-30: "Dancing in the Dark" (1949; Irving Reis), with William Powell, Betsy Drake, and Mark Stevens; and "How to Marry a Millionaire" (1953; Jean Negulesco), with Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable, and Lauren Bacall.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through March 22: "Something for Everyone" (1970; Harold Prince), with Angela Lansbury and Michael York; and "The Boys in the Band" (1970; William Friedkin).
March 23-24: "Good Morning, Babylon" (1987; Paolo and Vittorio Taviani), with Vincent Spano and Joaquim de Almeida; and "Bellissima" (1951; Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Anna Magnani and Walter Chiari.
March 25-26: "La Grande Illusion" (1937; Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "The Rules of the Game" (1939; Jean Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor.
March 27: "The Conformist" (1970; Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda; and "Luna" (1979; Bernardo Bertolucci), with Jill Clayburgh and Matthew Barry.
March 28-29: "Matewan" (1987; John Sayles), with Chris Cooper and James Earl Jones; and "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940; John Ford), with Henry Fonda and Jane Darwell.
From March 30: "Day for Night" (1973; François Truffaut; in French), with Jacqueline Bisset, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Jean-Pierre Léaud, and Valentina Cortese; and "Confidentially Yours" (1984; François Truffaut; in French), with Fanny Ardant and Jean-Louis Trintignant.

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through March 24: "O. C. and Stiggs" (1984; Robert Altman), with Daniel H. Jenkins, Neill Barry, and Dennis Hopper.
March 25-26: "Bombshell" (1933; Victor Fleming), with Jean Harlow, Franchot Tone, Lee Tracy, and Frank Morgan; and "Red-Headed Woman" (1932; Jack Conway), with Jean Harlow, Chester Morris, and Charles Boyer.
March 27: "I'm No Angel" (1933; Wesley Ruggles), with Mae West and Cary Grant; and "Blonde Venus" (1932; Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, Cary Grant, and Dickie Moore.
March 28-29: "Baby Face" (1933; Alfred E. Green), with Barbara Stanwyck, John Wayne, and George Brent; and "Call Her Savage" (1932; John Francis Dillon), with Clara Bow and Gilbert Roland.
March 30: "Me and My Gal" (1932; Raoul Walsh), with Spencer Tracy and Joan Bennett; and "Sailor's Luck" (1933; Raoul Walsh), with James Dunn, Sally Eilers, Sammy Cohen, and Victor Jory.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
March 21: "Trouble in Paradise" (1932; Ernst Lubitsch), with Kay Francis, Herbert Marshall, Miriam Hopkins, and Edward Everett Horton; and "Ninotchka" (1939; Ernst Lubitsch), with Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas.
March 22: "The Big Clock" (1948; John Farrow), with Ray Milland, Charles Laughton,



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FATHER SEBASTIAN KNEIPP (1821-1897)

Maureen O'Sullivan, Elsa Lanchester, and George Macready; and "No Way Out" (1987; Roger Donaldson), with Kevin Costner, Gene Hackman, Sean Young, and Will Patton.

March 23: "I Walked with a Zombie" (1943; Jacques Tourneur), with Frances Dee and James Ellison; and "Isle of the Dead" (1945; Mark Robson), with Ellen Drew and Boris Karloff.

March 24: "D.O.A." (1949; Rudolph Maté), with Edmond O'Brien; and "Curse of the Demon" (1958; Jacques Tourneur), with Dana Andrews, Peggy Cummins, and Niall MacGinnis.

March 25-26: "Withnail and I" (1987; Bruce Robinson), with Richard E. Grant and Paul McGann; and "30 Is a Dangerous Age, Cynthia" (1968; Joseph McGrath), with Dudley Moore, Eddie Foy, Jr., and Suzy Kendall.

March 27: "Blow-Up" (1966; Michelangelo Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings; and "The Conversation" (1974; Francis Ford Coppola), with Gene Hackman.

March 28: "Wonderful Times" (1951; Gunter Neuman; in German); and "The Captain of Koepenick" (1941), with Albert Basserman.

March 29: "A Hard Day's Night" (1964; Richard Lester), with the Beatles; and "Yellow Submarine" (1968; George Dunning), a full-length animated cartoon of the Beatles.

March 30: "The Seventh Victim" (1943; Mark Robson), with Tom Conway, Kim Hunter, and Jean Brooks; and "The Leopard Man" (1943; Jacques Tourneur), with Margo and Dennis O'Keefe.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

March 21: "Alexander Nevsky" (1938; Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian), with Nikolai Cherkassov; and "Ballad of a Soldier" (1959; Grigori Chukhrai; in Russian).

March 22: "Holiday" (1930; Edward H. Griffith), with Ann Harding, Mary Astor, Robert Ames, and Edward Everett Horton; and "No More Orchids" (1932; Walter Lang), with Carole Lombard, Walter Connolly, Louise Closser Hale, and Lyle Talbot.

March 23: "A Slight Case of Murder" (1938; Lloyd Bacon), with Edward G. Robinson, Allen Jenkins, and Jane Bryan; and "Arsenic and Old Lace" (1944; Frank Capra), with Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre, Josephine Hull, and Jean Adair.

March 24: "He Who Gets Slapped" (1924; Victor Seastrom), with Lon Chaney, Norma Shearer, and John Gilbert; and "The Man Who Laughs" (1928; Paul Leni), with Conrad Veidt and Mary Philbin.

March 25-26: "All About Eve" (1950; Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, Hugh Marlowe, Celeste Holm, and Thelma Ritter; and "Sunset Boulevard" (1950; Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson, William Holden, and Erich von Stroheim.

March 27: "Rain" (1932; Lewis Milestone), with Joan Crawford, Walter Huston, William Gargan, and Beulah Bondi; and "Of Human Bondage" (1934; John Cromwell), with Bette Davis, Leslie Howard, Frances Dee, and Kay Johnson.

March 28: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962; Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Silvia Pinal; and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977; Luis Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina.

March 29: "The Petrified Forest" (1936; Archie Mayo), with Leslie Howard, Bette Davis, and Humphrey Bogart; and "The Man Who Came to Dinner" (1942; William Keighley), with Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, and Monty Woolley.

March 30: "The Beachcomber" (1938; Erich Pommer), with Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester; and "Ruggles of Red Gap" (1935; Leo McCarey), with Charles Laughton and Mary Boland.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

Theatre 1: Through March 27: See listings under "Film Society of Lincoln Center."

Theatre 2: Through March 27: See listings under "Film Society of Lincoln Center." . . . ¶ March 28-29 at 3 and 6:30: Two different programs of films by Hans Richter.

Film Society of Lincoln Center (at MOMA)—The final programs in a festival of new films by new directors. March 21 at 6: "Feathers" (Australia; John Ruane) and "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History" (Australia; Mark Lewis). . . . ¶ March 21 at 8:30 and March 22 at 6: "Le Jupon Rouge" (France; Geneviève Lefebvre). . . . ¶ March 22 at 8:30: "Feathers" and "Cane Toads: An Unnatural History." . . . ¶ March 23 at 6: "A Chinese Ghost Story" (Hong Kong; Ching Siu-Tung). . . . ¶ March 23 at 8:30 and March 24 at 6: "Family Viewing" (Canada; Atom Egoyan). . . . ¶ March 24 at 8:30 and March 25 at 6: "The Choice" (Burkino Faso; Idrissa Ouedraogo). . . . ¶ March 25 at 8:30: "A Chinese Ghost Story." . . . ¶ March 25 at 10:30: "Friendship's Death" (Great Britain; Peter Wollen). . . . ¶ March 26 at 1: "Little Dorrit" (Great Britain; Christine Edzard). This is a six-hour film; there will be an intermission from 4 to 5. . . . ¶ March 26 at 8:30: "Friendship's Death." . . . ¶ March 27 at 1: "Little Dorrit." (Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9500.)

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"WNET Thirteen: 25 Years on the Air," over a hundred hours of news, public affairs, documentary, music, dance, theatre, nature, science, and children's programming. The second section, featuring music, dance, and theatre, is on view through April 23. The schedule of performances is complicated; our best advice is to phone the museum for titles, schedules, and ticket information. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2111)—March 21 at 8: "Himatsuri" (1984; Mitsuo Yanagimachi; in Japanese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ March 22 at 8: "Hellz-a-Poppin" (1941; H. C. Potter), with Olsen and Johnson. . . . ¶ March 23 at 8: "Wuthering Heights" (1953; Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ March 24 at 8: A program of gay and lesbian experimental films. . . . ¶ March 25 at 8: A program of films by Emily Breer and Ross McLaren. . . . ¶ March 26 at 8: "The Sky Socialist" (1986; Ken Jacobs) and "Jerry Takes a Back Seat Then Steps Out of the Picture" (1987; Ken Jacobs). . . . ¶ March 27 at 6: "Pandora's Box" (1928; G. W. Pabst; a German silent film), with Louise Brooks. . . . ¶ March 27 at 8: "Lives of Performers" (1972; Yvonne Rainer). . . . ¶ March 28 at 8: "Floating Clouds" (1955; Mikio Naruse; in Japanese, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ March 29 at 8: "Tarzam" (1961; Rudy Burckhardt), with Taylor Mead; and "The Playhouse" (1921), "One Week" (1920), and "The Frozen North" (1922), all silent films directed by Buster Keaton and Eddie Cline, with Keaton. . . . ¶ March 30 at 8: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962; Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish, with English subtitles), with Silvia Pinal.

Plays Into Film: The Playwright's Perspective—A series of films and lectures. March 24 at 8: "Swimming to Cambodia" (1987; Jonathan Demme). The actor Spalding Gray will be present. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100).

Zorina and Balanchine: The Movie Years—Two in a series of four films choreographed by George Balanchine, starring Vera Zorina. March 22 at 8: "On Your Toes" (1939; Ray Enright). . . . ¶ March 29 at 8: "I Was an Adventuress" (1940; Gregory Ratoff). (Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 570-3949.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(*Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Terrence Rafferty.*)

Au Revoir les Enfants (Goodbye, Children)—It's set in Occupied France in 1944, when the writer-director Louis Malle was an eleven-year-old at a Catholic boys' boarding school near Fontainebleau that sheltered several Jewish boys. The Gestapo learned they were there, and sent the ones they found to Auschwitz, and the headmaster to a work camp. One of the Jewish boys was in Malle's class, but Malle didn't get to know him well and didn't realize that he was Jewish. For the dramatic purposes of the movie, he has conceived a close friendship between his alter ego, the fair-haired Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), and the dark boy who is using the false name Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtö). But nothing comes into clear focus—not the boy's attitudes, not even the images. The film (especially the first half) seems padded, formal, discreet. It's like watching a faded French classic. And there's something unseemly about the way Jean is used as an aesthetic object—spiritual, sensitive, exotic. With Francine Racette as Julien's mother and François Négret as the informer. In French. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/22/88.) (Cinema I.)

Béatrice—Bertrand Tavernier's drama about incest in the Middle Ages must have been intended as a harshly realistic look at the barbarism of the times—there's no other explanation for its flat, dogged style. But the script (by Colo Tavernier O'Hagan, the director's ex-wife) is too oddly structured to give us a coherent history lesson: the movie's embodiment of evil, the brutal knight François de Cortemare (Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu), is a man who very pointedly *doesn't* believe in God, so it's hard to see his viciousness as particularly representative of a highly religious age. And the director's "realism" is selective. What should be the film's most shocking scene—Cortemare's rape of his teen-age daughter, Béatrice (Julie Delpy)—is softened by dim lighting and discreet cuts, while a scene in which Béatrice, pregnant by her father, persuades her brother to kick her repeatedly in the stomach is rendered in stark daylight and seems to last forever. The director's treatment makes the girl's attempted abortion far uglier than the rape; but there's no telling, in this sloppy, confused movie, whether this is a deliberate effect or the unfortunate result of careless filmmaking. The cinematography is by Bruno de Keyzer, who achieves a handful of striking compositions. In French.—T.R. (Paris.)

Broadcast News—The writer-producer-director James L. Brooks puts us inside the world of a network's Washington bureau and sets up an adversarial relationship between the reddish-blond charmer Tom (William Hurt), who represents TV's corruption of the news into entertainment, and dark, broody Aaron (Albert Brooks), a near-genius newsman who, on the surface, at least, represents substance and integrity. The heroine, Jane (Holly Hunter), is a producer, and she and Aaron are supposed to be high-principled professionals, as well as close friends. The satirical, romantic-comedy dilemma is that Jane finds herself falling in love with Tom, who incarnates everything that she despises. Basically all the picture is saying is that beautiful, assured people have an edge over the rest of us, no matter how high our I.Q.s are. And it lacks any filmmaking excitement. With all the surface authenticity Jim Brooks gives us, he himself represents the corruption of movies into TV. (1/11/88) (Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Embassy 72nd St.; through March 24.)

The Dead—Working in a mood of tranqui exuberance, the eighty-year-old John Huston made a great warm, funny movie out of the great story that James Joyce wrote at twenty-five. Huston never before blended his actors so intuitively, so musically. The party that the Morkan sisters and their fortyish niece give in their Dublin town house on January 6, 1904, the Feast of the Epiphany, suggests the Chekhov production of your dreams or maybe one of Satyajit Ray's triumphs. Th cast is glorious: Donal McCann is Gabriel Anjelica Huston is Gabriel's wife, Gretta *Donal Donnelly is Freddy;* Marie Kean i Freddy's mother; Cathleen Delany is Aun

Julia; Helena Carroll is Aunt Kate; Ingrid Craigie is Mary Jane; Dan O'Herlihy is the Protestant Mr. Browne; and Frank Patterson is the tenor who sings "The Lass of Aughrim." Screenplay by Tony Huston; cinematography by Fred Murphy; score by Alex North. (12/14/87) (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Festival; through March 24.)

Empire of the Sun—At the outset, this Steven Spielberg epic is so big and majestic you want to laugh in pleasure, and it stays that way for about forty-five minutes—Spielberg takes over Shanghai, and makes it his city. But then, first in brief patches and then in longer ones, his directing goes terribly wrong. The story, taken from J. G. Ballard's autobiographical novel, is set at the outbreak of the Second World War, and it's about Jim (Christian Bale), an eleven-year-old British schoolboy, who is separated from his parents when the Japanese Army invades the city, on December 8, 1941, and how he changes in order to survive three years of starving in a prison camp. It isn't told straightforwardly, though. Spielberg throws himself into bravura passages, lingers over them trying to give them a poetic obsessiveness, and loses his grasp of the narrative. For the sake of emotion—to have something to say, to give the picture some meaning—he pumps it full of false emotion. (That's what his poetry is.) John Williams' editorializing music swells and swooshes, trying to make you feel that something religious is going on. Christian Bale is a fine performer, directed superlatively; also with John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson, Nigel Havers, and Joe Pantoliano. The adaptation is credited to Tom Stoppard (it was also worked on by Menno Meyjes); the cinematography is by Allen Daviau. Spielberg had permission to shoot in Shanghai for only three weeks; the settings were matched up and constructed in Spain and London. 2 hours and 33 minutes. (12/28/87) (Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

atal Attraction—With Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, and Anne Archer; directed by Adrian Lyne. (10/19/87) (Guild; through March 24. . . . ¶ Embassy 72nd St.; starting March 25.)

rantic—It begins promisingly, with Harrison Ford as a San Francisco heart surgeon who comes to Paris with his wife (Betty Buckley); they arrive at their hotel and while he takes a shower she disappears. The director, Roman Polanski, shows his guile and wit, but a thriller needs more than an occasional perverse undertone; it needs some design, some shapeliness. This thing grinds on without ever being able to compensate for its pathetic plot and its unwritten characters. It involves mixed-up suitcases and a couple of night clubs and rooftops, and dope dealers and Arabs and a childlike, amoral tootsie (Emmanuelle Seigner). The script is credited to Polanski and Gerard Brach; the cinematography is by Witold Sobocinski; the music is by Ennio Morricone. With brief appearances by Alexandra Stewart and David Huddleston. (3/21/88) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Sutton, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 34th St. East; through March 29.)

ood Morning, Vietnam—It sounded like a first-rate idea: Robin Williams doing his manic free-association comedy as a disk jockey, Adrian Cronauer, on Armed Forces Radio in Saigon in 1965. But the picture makes the character out to be a vulnerable, compassionate, respectful-of-the-Vietnamese wonderful guy, and the director, Barry Levinson, has a numbing sense of rhythm. Williams' riffs are chopped short, and the film keeps cutting to soldiers breaking up over his spiel before it's out of his mouth. There is an Adrian Cronauer, and the movie is very loosely based on his exploits, but the way the story line (from the script by Mitch Markowitz) has been directed it's a clumsier version of the plots of fifties musicals. (1/11/88) (Art Greenwich Twin, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through March 29.)

airspray—The writer-director John Waters treats the message movie as a genre to be parodied, just like the teenpic. Combining the two, he comes up with a pop dadaist musical comedy, set in Baltimore in 1962. Waters loves narrative, and he has half a dozen plots crisscrossing each other. In the middle are the spherical Mrs. Edna Turnblad (played by the male actor Divine) and her baby-blimp daughter, Tracy (Ricki Lake); they wear matching mother-and-daughter outfits. Tracy, who's the newest teen-age dancer on "The Corny Collins Show," discovers that black kids aren't allowed to take part and she becomes a leader in the fight for integration. Meanwhile, Divine watches over Tracy and preens like a mother hen. There's a what-the-hell quality to Divine's acting which the film needs; it would be too close to a real teenpic without it. When Divine's Edna Turnblad is onscreen in the sleeveless dresses she's partial to, the movie has something like the lunacy of a W. C. Fields in drag. With Ruth Brown, Debbie Harry, Sonny Bono, Jerry Stiller, Shawn Thompson, Ric Ocasek, Pia Zadora, Jo Ann Havrilla, and Waters himself as a sicko psychiatrist. (3/7/88) (Loews New York Twin, Waverly, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy; through March 24.)

High Tide—This is a woman's picture in the way that "Stella Dallas" was—it's about the mother-daughter bond. But it's also a woman's picture in a new way: the Australian director Gillian Armstrong has the technique and the assurance to put a woman's fluid, not fully articulated emotions right onto the screen. And she has an actress—Judy Davis—who's a genius at moods. As one of three backup singers for a touring Elvis imitator, Judy Davis is contemptuous of the cruddy act, contemptuous of herself. Feeling put down, the dumb-lug Elvis fires her, and she's left alone at the beginning of winter in a ramshackle beach town on the magnificent, windswept coast of New South Wales. There she encounters her lonely teenage daughter (Claudia Karvan), whom she'd given up to her confident, belligerent mother-in-law (Jan Adele) thirteen years earlier. A great many young women are likely to feel that this is the movie they've wanted to make. The script is by Laura Jones; the superb cinematography is by Russell Boyd, who was also the camera operator; the stunningly effective editing is by Nick Beauman. With Colin Friels, Bob Purtell, John Clayton, and Mark Hembrow. (2/22/88) (Lincoln Plaza; through March 24. . . . ¶ Cinema Studio; starting March 25.)

Hope and Glory—A great comedy about the blitz. In this autobiographical film, the writer-director John Boorman has had the inspiration to desentimentalize wartime England and show us the Second World War the way he saw it as an eight-year-old—as a party that kept going day after day, night after night. Boorman lets his characters say the previously unsayable. Bored with crouching indoors during the nightly raids by the Luftwaffe, the dimply blond fifteen-year-old Dawn (Sammi Davis), the eldest of the three Rohan children, runs outside, watches the firefighters at work on a blazing house, and dances in the Rohans' postage-stamp-size front garden. "It's lovely!" she calls out. The large cast includes Sebastian Rice Edwards as the eight-year-old Bill, Geraldine Muir as his little sister, Sarah Miles as his mother, David Hayman as his father, Ian Bannen as his grandfather, and Susan Wooldridge, Derrick O'Connor, and Jean-Marc Barr as the Canadian jokester. (10/5/87) (Gemini, and Quad Cinema.)

Jean de Florette—With Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Daniel Auteuil; directed by Claude Berri. In French. (7/13/87) (Bleecker St. Cinema; starting March 25.)

The Last Emperor—Bernardo Bertolucci tells the story of Pu Yi, who was not quite three when, in 1908, he was set on the Dragon Throne in Peking's Forbidden City and became the titular ruler of a third of the people on earth. After being deposed and then enthroned again in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, he was in Soviet custody for five years, and then spent ten years being "reëducated" in a Chinese war-criminals prison. The movie doesn't have the juicy absurdity that seems to pour right out of the historical story. And it suppresses the drama. But it has pictorial grace and a dull fascination. Bertolucci presents Pu Yi (John Lone) as a man without will or backbone who lives his life as spectacle—who watches his life go by. And so we're given a historical pageant without a protagonist. There's an idea here, but it's a dippy idea—it results in a passive movie. With Joan Chen and Peter O'Toole. Cinematography by Vittorio Storaro; the film

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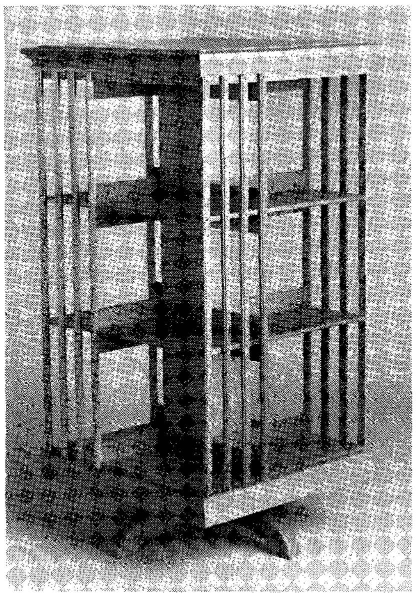

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shows the palaces and courtyards of the two-hundred-and-fifty-acre Forbidden City. 2 hours and 46 minutes. (11/30/87) (8th St. Playhouse, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

Little Nikita—The idea is promising: Jeff Grant (River Phoenix), a smart, good-looking San Diego teen-ager whose biggest problem is how to get into the Air Force Academy, discovers that his bland parents are actually Russians—spies, at that. The Grants (Caroline Kava and Richard Jenkins) are "sleepers," agents who have been inactive for years but must remain perpetually ready for assignment. After a couple of decades of suburban American existence, Mom and Dad aren't even close to being ready when the call comes; their cover has turned into their life, and they've gone soft. This is better material for comedy than for drama, but the director, Richard Benjamin, seems to have gone soft somewhere himself. Instead of emphasizing the absurdity of the Grants' dilemma and the hilariously blatant contrivances of the plot, he treats "Little Nikita" as a straightforward suspense thriller. (This goes against his own strengths as well as the story's: he has no idea how to stage action sequences.) When all the unconvincing thrills are over, the movie winds up with an embarrassing burst of "heart": it wants us to know that family is good, and that Russians—*some* Russians—are, maybe, sort of like normal people, almost (except for the bushy eyebrows). Sidney Poitier, as the F.B.I. agent who breaks the bad news to Jeff, comes closest to resembling a human being. Also with Richard Bradford and Richard Lynch. The script is by John Hill and Bo Goldman; only the slightest trace of Goldman's usual wit and craft is evident.—T.R. (Gemini, Quad Cinema, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Manon of the Spring—Will Fate settle the hash of César Soubeyran (Yves Montand) and his cretinous nephew, Ugolin (Daniel Auteuil), the Provençal farmers whose treachery caused the death of gentle, hunchbacked Jean de Florette? Of course it will. To keep us awake while we're waiting for the inevitable, this concluding half of Claude Berri's adaptation of the Marcel Pagnol novel "The Water of the Hills" serves up pretty much the same menu as "Jean de Florette" (see above): changing seasons (exquisitely shot by Bruno Nuytten), Montand looking sly, Auteuil gaping, wiry peasants and fat shopkeepers shouting at each other over bottles of vin ordinaire. With Emmanuelle Béart. Screenplay by Berri and Gérard Brach, with a credit for original dialogue by Pagnol. In French. —T.R. (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

Masquerade—A tranquil, sophisticated thriller set in the Hamptons. The orphan heroine (Meg Tilly) belongs to the old rich; her money—about two hundred million dollars—has a patina. The men who circle around her are Rob Lowe as a hired-hand yachting captain, John Glover as the last of her mother's many husbands, and Doug Savant as a new police officer. Thin as the picture is, it has an odd, subterranean pull. Murders take place, but the narrative just keeps unfolding effortlessly, and you're drawn along, wanting to understand the pattern of deceit. Bob Swaim directed, from a crafty and even-toned script by Dick Wolf; the cinematography, by David Watkin, gives the life of the rich a luxuriance—makes it palpably desirable. With Dana Delany, Kim Cattrall, and Erik Holland. (3/21/88) (Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ U. A. East, and 23rd St. West Triplex; through March 24.)

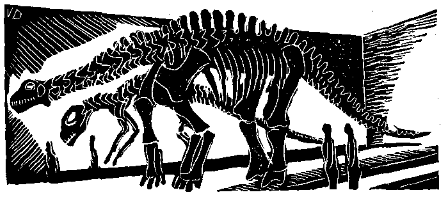
Moonstruck—A rose-tinted black comedy, with its own special lushness. Cher is devastatingly funny and sinuous and beautiful as a widowed bookkeeper who lives with her Italian-American family in a big old brownstone in Brooklyn. When the bookkeeper and her fiancé's brother, a baker (Nicolas Cage), start lusting for one another, a fairy-tale full moon lights up the movie. And when you see that the whole cast of family members are involved in libidinal confusions the opera-buffa structure can make you feel close to deliriously happy. Cage is a wonderful romantic clown: he can look stupefied while he smolders. And the director, Norman Jewison, working from John Patrick Shanley's script, stylizes the ethnic performances given by the husky-voiced Olympia Dukakis, the great, leering Julie Bovasso, Vincent Gardenia, Danny Aiello, John Mahoney, and Anita Gillette. The picture is slender, but it's an original: its mockery is a giddy homage to our desire for grand passion. (1/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, and 86th Street East Twin.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

My Life as a Dog—Lasse Hallström's film is a gentle, episodic narrative of a twelve-year-old boy (Anton Glanzelius) growing up in nineteen-fifties Sweden. Ingemar, a lively but sensitive kid, gets passed around from household to household when his mother becomes seriously ill. At its best, the movie is very shrewd about the ways children protect themselves from disorienting, and even traumatic, experiences. Hallström's naïveté as a director gives many of the dramatic scenes a touching straightforwardness. But that same quality sabotages the comic passages with a tone of heavy, self-satisfied whimsy. With Tomas von Brömssen, Anki Liden, Ingmari Carlsson, and Melinda Kinnaman. Screenplay by Hallström, Reidar Jönsson, Brasse Brännstrom, and Per Berglund, from Jönsson's novel. In Swedish.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid—This second film by the director Stephen Frears and the writer Hanif Kureishi, who made "My Beautiful Laundrette," has so much going on that it keeps losing track of what it's about. Sammy (Ayub Khan Din) and Rosie (Frances Barber) and their friends are Third World bohemians who live in a decaying, racially mixed part of London. Sammy's father, Rafi (Shashi Kapoor), who was a minister in the repressive government of Pakistan and is fleeing threats on his life, thinks he can return to the courteous, law-abiding England he remembers from thirty years before. He comes from the airport straight into a race riot—the movie is his nightmare experience of the new London. What we see is an apocalyptic carnival that's like street theatre. At times, it's as if Swinging London had come back as a race riot. Made in a documentary manner as stylized as a Hollywood musical, the movie is hyperconscious of art, of politics, of itself, and at times it's exasperatingly affectless. At its best, it's playfully Godardian, as in the sequence with the screen split horizontally and three multiracial couples stretched out on top of each other, and the Ghetto Lites singing a reggae version of "My Girl." There are two marvellous performances: by Kapoor and by Claire Bloom, as a woman he deserted long ago. (11/16/87) (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

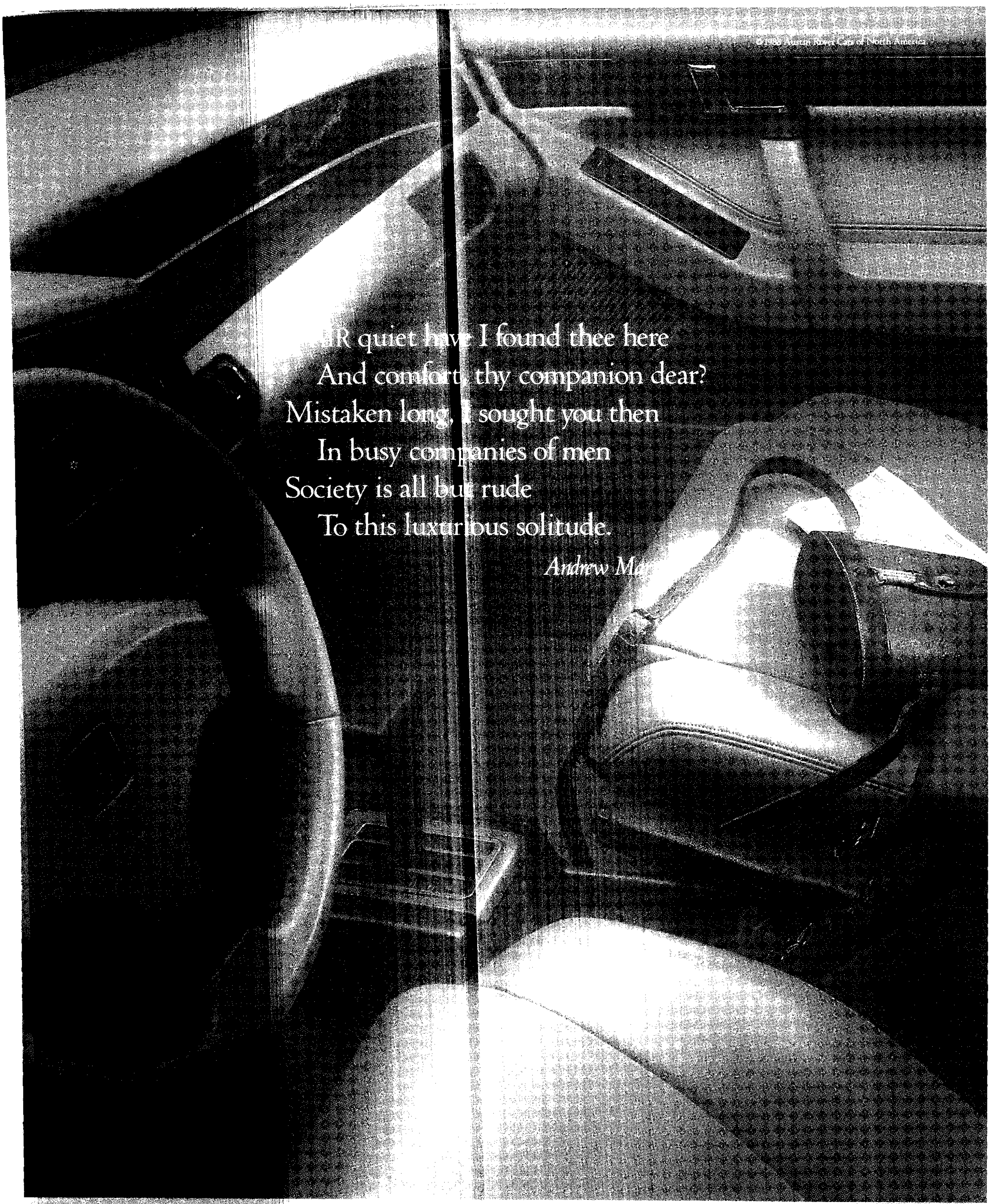
Shoot to Kill—Sidney Poitier plays an F.B.I. agent tracking a deranged killer through the Pacific Northwest wilderness. The screenwriters (Harv Zimmel, Michael Burton, and Daniel Petrie, Jr.) have constructed this story as if they were desperadoes on the run, and Roger Spottiswoode, the director, is a hostage to their slapdash, random-killer methods. The action set pieces are superbly staged, but less powerful than they'd be if there were any coherent narrative context for them. Spottiswoode outclasses the material, and so does Poitier: though he doesn't really have a character to play, his quiet authority keeps the movie from seeming as cold and cheesily manipulative as it might have. Also with Tom Berenger, Kirstie Alley, Clancy Brown, and Richard Masur. The excellent cinematography is by Michael Chapman.—T.R. (Regency, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ D. W. Griffith, and 23rd St. West Triplex; through March 24.)



Switching Channels—It's adapted from "His Girl Friday," the 1940 film version of the 1928 play "The Front Page," but it has lost most of the inspired engineering that gave the material its snap, and the attempt to update the plot to the era of television seems halfhearted. Still, this disreputable, burlesque version has its own rambunctious, sloppy humor, and the director, Ted Kotcheff—short as he may be on visual invention—has a sense of tempo. Things don't stall. Burt Reynolds reins himself in and shows some sly grace as Sully, the news director of a Chicago-based cable outfit called Satellite Network News; as Sully's ex-wife and star reporter, Kathleen Turner is lusty and likable even when she doesn't hit the right tones; and Christopher Reeve is enjoyably silly as the manufacturer of athletic equipment—a hulking vain twerp—whom the star reporter means to marry. (He crinkles his face in the grin of a goofus.) Ned Beatty is marvellously piggish as the corrupt D.A., and when Henry Gibson, who plays a convicted cop-killer, turns his stare on us, we feel a frazzled, poetic rapport with him. Also with George Newbern as Sully's assistant, Laura Robinson as the Twinkie, and Al Waxman, Fiona Reid, Joe Silver, and several fresh performers from Toronto (where most of the movie was shot). The script (erratic, but with some good gags) is by Jonathan Reynolds; the Michel Legrand score is just litter on the soundtrack. (3/21/88) (Eastside Cinema; through March 24.)

The Unbearable Lightness of Being—Directed by Philip Kaufman, this adaptation of Milan Kundera's novel is touching in sophisticated ways that you don't expect from an American director. A prankish sex comedy, it treats modern political events with a delicate—yet almost sly—sense of tragedy. It's the way the variations of jealousy and erotic attraction are played out by the three principal actors—an Englishman (Daniel Day-Lewis), a Swedish woman (Lena Olin), and a Frenchwoman (Juliette Binoche), all playing Czechs—that gives the movie its wonderfully unresolved texture. The story begins in Prague in 1968, during the period of freedom of expression and artistic flowering known as "socialism with a human face." Day-Lewis's Tomas is a hedonist, a womanizer, and an eminent young brain surgeon; Olin's Sabina, a painter who is his longtime sex partner, and Binoche's Tereza, whom he marries, represent the two poles of his life—lightness and weight. Kaufman has an exuberant temperament, and the spirit of the film is younger and looser than that of the book; a short two hours and fifty-three minutes, the picture has a whirling beauty. With Derek de Lint, Pavel Landovsky, Erland Josephson, and Donald Moffat. Script by Jean-Claude Carrière and Kaufman; editing by Walter Murch; cinematography by Sven Nykvist. (2/8/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Loews Tower East; through March 24.)

Wall Street—Oliver Stone makes films in the overwrought pulp style of directors like Samuel Fuller and Robert Aldrich. Everything has the hysterically urgent tone of a war movie, and the actors scream their lines as if they were struggling to be heard above the din of artillery fire. Applying his combat-zone sensibility to the financial community, Stone produces some good, weird comedy in the movie's manic first hour, as the young stockbroker hero (Charlie Sheen) claws his way to success by providing inside information to a ruthless corporate raider (Michae Douglas). As the picture goes on, though, the disparity between Stone's complex subject and his melodramatic style becomes less anc less entertaining. Repeating the worst idea ir "Platoon," he turns the movie into a contes for the young hero's soul, a battle between hi decent union-man father (Martin Sheen) anc the greedy, reptilian Douglas. The dialogue gets overexplicit, the tone becomes desperately moralistic, and we begin to wonder i Charlie Sheen's soul is really worth all thi fuss. (At one point, he steps out onto his bal cony and muses aloud, "Who am I?," and th audience has to think a minute: Tom Cruise Judd Nelson?) Also with Daryl Hannal (cruelly directed), Hal Holbrook, and Terenc Stamp.—T.R. (Gotham Cinema.)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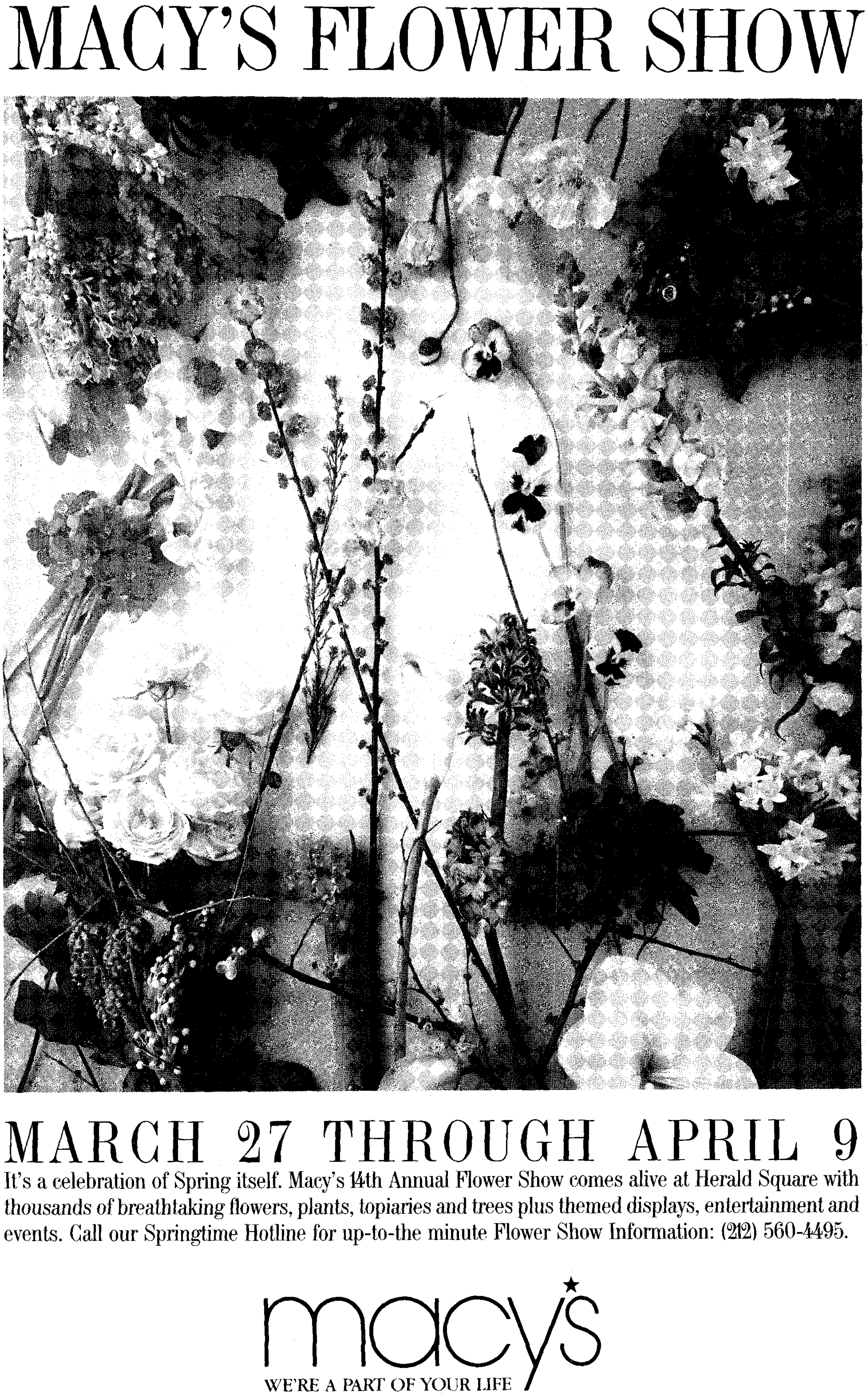

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Notes and Comment

MARCH being National Frozen Food Month, we bought a box of Glad-Lock Heavy Duty Reclosable Freezer Bags and a Freezette plastic freezer dish with locking lid at our grocery store the other day and took them home, thinking we might whomp up a couple of gallons of spaghetti sauce and freeze most of it in quart-size portions for future reference. We sauté chunks of chicken in butter and garlic, dump in tomato sauce, and add mushrooms and zucchini, and serve it over spaghetti—a good piece of cuisine we call Pasta à la Pete. We cook it, we eat it, and after a couple of forkfuls we say, "It's good, isn't it?" Other people around the table say, "*Yes*, it's good." It's not a dish that you need to trouble yourself to frame a major artistic compliment for—it's just good food, that's all. Anyway, it's good enough, like Glad-Lock bags themselves. Made of clear plastic, they lock O.K. They hold food. So we were surprised to see on the Glad-Lock Freezer Bag package "Free TWA Air Miles Inside, Save 'Em or Trade 'Em for Cash" and to discover that our purchase of twenty quart-size freezer bags had won us five free miles on T.W.A. and a chance to win hundreds or thousands of additional miles, perhaps even "unlimited free air travel for one year." It seemed excessive.

To find out how many bonus miles we had won, we simply rubbed the gold film off the Instant Bonus Miles Certificate inside the Glad-Lock box. It was a big relief to see that our bonus was a mere twenty free T.W.A. miles, or a total of twenty-five for the box. Unlimited free air travel for one year is the sort of prize to turn you and your amily into surly beasts and disgust our friends and ruin your children nd bring your marriage crashing into a low line of trees—a year that would teach you never to purchase another freezer bag in your life. You couldn't pay us enough to accept a prize like that; we'd gladly lock ourself into this office rather than face a year aboard an airline.

Whoever thought up this frequent-freezer program for Glad-Lock overlooked a better idea, and that's a few free miles aboard a train heading for those garden spots where in a few months they'll be hauling in bushel baskets of gorgeous stuff that would make our pasta something glorious, the "Appalachian Spring" of spaghettis. Twenty-five miles aboard Amtrak would take you within range of gardens where you could put Glad-Lock to good use, collecting zucchini, snap beans and limas, small red potatoes, fresh leaf lettuce, beet greens, and green tomatoes, which taste so good fried in cornmeal. Five free miles on the Lexington Avenue subway would take you to Union Square and its lavish weekend green market. Trains, not planes, are the way to travel for purposes of foraging. The train rolls along past the back yards and gardens of towns, such as the garden of our youth, somewhere off that way, where in April a neighbor named Fred Peterson plowed our half-acre patch with his tractor, and we raked it and planted it in a Saturday. The dirt smelled fresh and good then, and after every rain and when the sun shone, too. Dirt is what we miss in the city, and one of these days we may take our Glad-Lock bags and ride up along the Hudson, stopping between here and Albany to collect soil samples. These bags, which are reclosable, would keep quarts of dirt fresh for weeks, and day after day we could take some out, spread it on white paper on our desk, and feel in touch with life. In spring, an eighteenth-floor office in Manhattan is so isolated from the main action we might as well be flying. Some clean dirt would be good to have. One could plant a desktop tomato and maintain contact with what's happening out there.

FRESH
DAILY

Get off that plane and put your feet on the ground, Glad. April is coming, which is National Spring Month. Take a hike.

• •

Divine's Funeral

A FRIEND writes:

There were ten pallbearers. The casket was ice blue with chrome trim. Divine wore black, and had a small, round mirror encircled with diamonds and rubies pinned to his lapel. His head, without a wig, looked small and bald. We took seats near the back of the chapel at the Ruck Funeral Home in Towson, Maryland, north of Baltimore—Charles, Peter, Fred, and I. We had seen "Hairspray," Divine's most recent movie, directed by John Waters, and many other Divine movies together. We'd heard about Divine's death from people who had only just heard of Divine. They wanted to know who he was—a huge, incredibly talented actor in the best Aristophanic tradition, with a hilarious rich legato voice for delivering such lines as these, written by Waters for Divine as Edna Turnblad, in "Hairspray": "It's the times, Wilbur. They're a-changin'. Something's blowin' in the wind. Fetch me my diet pills, wouldja, hon?"

We left New York at eight in the

morning for the two-o'clock service in Towson, about a three-hour drive away, with visions of mobs outside the funeral home. We got stuck in a traffic jam for forty-one minutes at the Delaware-Maryland border, and Charles was frantic. "Traffic is going to be backed up all the way to Divine's funeral," he said. When we arrived at Ruck's, at about noon, the parking lot was empty except for four men in black, one of whom stopped us and asked what we wanted. We said we were there for the Milstead service. Divine's parents named him Harris Glenn Milstead. We were told where to park and were directed to the chapel, where, unexpectedly, we found ourselves alone with Divine. We were the first ones there.

Everything we saw around Baltimore was like something out of a John Waters movie. The funeral home, for instance, one of a chain in the Baltimore area, was potentially a set, with its dropped ceiling and its blond pews and its piped-in bell-and-organ music. And people recognizable from the films kept coming in. Mink Stole was there, and several of the teen-agers who had worked with Divine in "Hairspray," and a huge black woman with a blond wig who was rolled up the aisle in a wheelchair and was later identified as the bus hijacker in "Polyester." The service began promptly at two, by which time the chapel was filled. Extra chairs had been set up in the back, and there was standing room only.

There were two contingents at the funeral—the family and friends of Harris Glenn Milstead and the friends and admirers of Divine—and as the service went on, the two sides grew closer to each other. There was one speaker from each side: John Waters, who had given Glenn Milstead the name Divine when they started making movies together as teen-agers in nearby Lutherville, and the Reverend Leland Higginbotham, in whose church Divine was baptized Harris Glenn. The minister said that it had been very perplexing to be Glenn's family's spiritual adviser during certain years, when he and the Milsteads didn't understand what Glenn was doing. (Frances and Harris Milstead had been estranged from their son, but they had become reconciled, and the past eight years had been happy ones for the family.) Glenn, he said, was one of those people who come along only every few centuries and are such originals and so far ahead of their time that you don't know what to make of them, like Galileo. Waters talked about how pleased Divine had been with his reviews for "Hairspray," in which he had a dual role—how he sat in a hotel room after the New York première and said, "Read me Pauline Kael again. Read me the 'incomparable Divine' part from the New York *Times*." One of the last people to see Divine alive, Waters said, was Greg Gorman, a photographer, who had driven him to his hotel in Los Angeles, where Divine was doing a part in a TV series. As Gorman was leaving, Divine appeared on the balcony and sang "Arrivederci, Roma!"

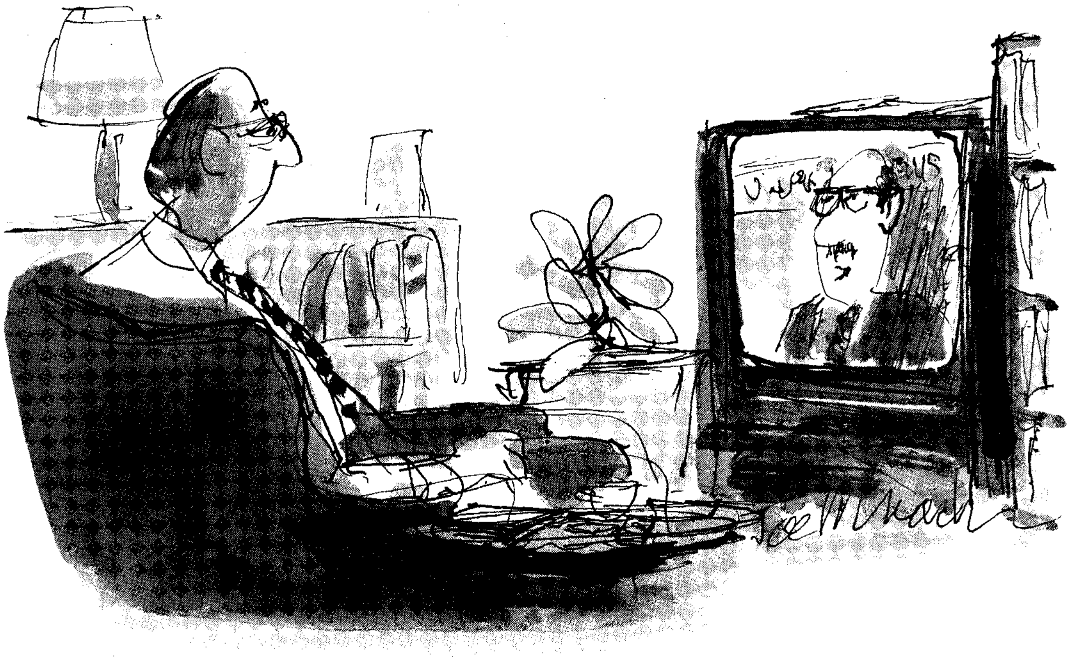
Divine would have loved the TV cameras outside the funeral home when the pallbearers emerged. He would have loved each of the many limousines in the funeral procession, and the view of the Baltimore suburbs from Prospect Hill Cemetery, featuring a shopping mall and a large "HECHT'S" sign. He would have loved the green chenille slipcovers on the folding chairs set up opposite his grave in the Milstead family plot. He would have loved the crowd, mostly in black but with the occasional electric-blue jacket or head of hair dyed a shade of scarlet that Mother Nature never ratified, and he would have loved the flowers (his favorites, it was said, were daffodils and gardenias), including the arrangement in the shape of a pink flamingo that said on it "R.I.P. Divine." He would have loved the tawny-colored thing like a sarcophagus lid—too beautiful to bury—that had on it a bronze laurel wreath and a compromise: the name Harris Divine Milstead.

I think, too, he would have loved how after the funeral we drove down into Baltimore and, with a street map and two details from "Hairspray" that stuck in Charles's head—the name Clinton, from one of Baltimore's big green-and-white street signs, and the address 33-11 Eastern Avenue, from a spiel for the Hefty Hideaway, where Edna Turnblad and her daughter, Tracy, get new outfits—we stumbled upon the unmistakable corner building, with garish paintings of poodles and other dogs on it, that is the Turnblad residence in "Hairspray" (Lucky 3 Dog Grooming in real life). At 33-11 Eastern we found the Hefty Hideaway (actually Pacey's, "The Woman's Quality Shop"), and right next to it, at the corner of Eastern and Clinton, was the real-life establishment where, as Edna Turnblad, Divine gets a new hairdo: the El Dorado Academy of Cosmetology.

Alligators

FOUR-FIFTEEN on a Tuesday morning in Times Square. In the middle of Broadway, two young women are embracing alligators. One young woman, Brookie Maxwell, wears a dark fake-fur coat; the other, Amy Rosmarin, has on a leather jacket. The alligators are about four and a half feet long, and they have no tails—they're all broad muscle and gaping jaws. Only from close up, about three feet away, is it clear that the alligators are papier-mâché. (Their interiors are made of chicken wire and aluminum-foil roasting pans.) They're dark green—*alligator* green (in nature, alligators are really black, Brookie Maxwell, who designed the papier-mâché version, says, and only look green, because algae grow on them)—and they seem to be rearing up voraciously. They are lovingly detailed, with carefully molded leathery ridges on their backs. The insides of their mouths are painted bright pink and red, and have beautiful white rows of sharp papier-mâché teeth. Their eyes are glass marbles.

Brookie and Amy are hugging the alligators to their bodies—for warmth, and because there is no other way to carry them—while they search for suitable sewer grates to tether them to. They began at three o'clock with twenty-one papier-mâché gators and secured two of them to grates outside the New York Stock Exchange, on Wall Street, and then moved uptown. When the sun comes up, it will seem (they hope) as though alligators had risen from sewers all through the city: at Penn Station, at Grand Central, at Sheridan Square, at West Broadway and Spring, at the World Trade Center—*everywhere.* Brookie and Amy are so keen on their search that they don't seem to notice a few people who emerge from the shadows on Forty-second Street and watch them dully. All night, Brookie and Amy have shown the absolute fearlessness (just touching the edge of recklessness) that is granted in New York—



"*Today, in a surprise move, everyone in the media veered slightly to the right.*"

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especially in Times Square at four o'clock in the morning—only to the pure in heart or the heavily armed.

On the corner of Forty-third and Broadway, they find two good grates—one just outside Nathan's and the other directly across the street. One sewer grate in New York looks much like another, but this morning Brookie and Amy have discovered that there are in fact two kinds of grates in Manhattan: the more common grates, with long, narrowly spaced vertical bars, and the better, rarer ones (better, at least, for alligator tethering), which are horizontal checkerboards of widely spaced intersecting bars. It's more difficult to attach the alligators to the vertical grates. And the vertical grates tend to be filthier—although, as the young women's accomplice, Jim Moorehead, who is parked on Forty-second Street in a van with the remaining gators, has pointed out, you wouldn't want to eat your breakfast off the checkerboard grates, either. Brookie, who is determined, patient, and a little imperious, tells Amy to take the farther grate, across rom Nathan's, while she secures her gator to the nearer one. She kneels in ront of the grate and fastens the gator o it with two wires that dangle from he creature's aft section. She gets up and positions the alligator so that it eems to be crawling up from the ewer onto the sidewalk. Then she walks away with what she calls her gator gait—a purposeful, aristocratic tride. ("*Alli*gator, Officer? I don't now *what* you're talking about.")

Across the street, though, Amy has aken too long, and has been surounded by three men. One carries a walkie-talkie. Auxiliary cops.

"Haven't you heard of the *legend*?" Brookie hears Amy asking as she runs cross the street.

"That these things grow in the ewers?" the man with the walkie-alkie says. "Sure, I seen them on my ther job, at Con Ed."

"You have?" Amy cries.

"A rubber one. A joke. A rubber ke," the man explains.

Brookie steps in. "This is public art," she explains.

The man relaxes. He says soberly, "Well, if you've taken the trouble to make these— You make them by hand?" Amy and Brookie nod. "Well, if you made them by *hand*, it just seems to me like a shame to leave them in this exposed-type condition," he says. "You find destructive individuals in this area of the city. Why don'tcha put 'em on the tops of *cars*, and *drive* with them? You do all this work, and then some of these destructive individuals just come along . . ." He shakes his head.

Two days before, on a warm Sunday afternoon, Brookie, Amy, and Jim were out on the roof of Brookie's building, on East Sixteenth Street, putting the last touches on the twenty-one papier-mâché alligators. The gators were laid out all pointing in the same direction. As the sun sank, they suggested a group of Islamic alligators facing Mecca in prayer at sunset.

"I want to make public art," Brookie was explaining to a friend who had come to see the alligators. Brookie Maxwell is a small young woman with large, intense eyes and a stubborn jaw. "But *really* for the public—something that everyone can understand. I grew up in New York, and the alligator legend was part of everyone's childhood. We all wished it was true. Always."

"We called the city, the sewer people, and they said there aren't any alligators and there never have been," Amy put in. She added that they had found a clipping from the *Times* in 1935 that dealt quite seriously with an alligator sighting in East Harlem, and may have been the source of the overgrown-pet-from-Florida legend.

Brookie said, "Jimmy and I have been reading a lot lately about the early years of Pop Art. I hope this piece is in that spirit. Things could be simpler for artists then. They were artists, not businessmen or lawyers. Even simple people are so sophisticated about art now. People, ordinary people, ask me, when I tell them about the alligator project, 'Well, is this performance art or a happening?' "

By five o'clock on Tuesday morning, Amy and Brookie, with Jim sitting patiently at the wheel, are at the corner of Fifty-seventh and Fifth, kneeling at two sewer grates across from Tiffany's. They have it down to a science: the horizontal grate spotted from the van, the quick tethering, then a step back—and the gator rising from its sewer, after *years* down there, hungry yet friendly.

"It's so funny what you see on the city streets. This is the quietest part of town *by far*," Amy says. They drive up Madison toward the Metropolitan Museum, and she says, "It's so exciting to think about what's going on with the pieces where we can't see them. Downtown, there are probably people already looking at the alligators, and interacting with them, experiencing them in some way."

"*Amy*," Jimmy says.

"What did I say?" Amy asks, a little hurt.

" 'Interacting.' "

"Is that a cliché?" Amy asks. "I mean, it's not like I said 'A stitch in time saves nine,' or anything."

"It's O.K.," Brookie says calmly. "With this piece, you think about the word 'interacting' only slightly less than you think about the word 'liability.' "

"*Are* we liable?" Amy says.

"No," Brookie says.

The light comes up suddenly just as they are leaving the East Side. By the time they are on the West Side, it's morning. They spot their first jogger as they attach an alligator to a grate outside the American Museum of Natural History, just in front of the statue of Teddy Roosevelt. Then they drive to Seventy-second Street and Broadway and attach an alligator to a grate in front of the Papaya King store. A man with a ring of keys dangling from his chino trousers comes by, walks into the Papaya King, buys two frankfurters, and comes out to eat them. He sees the alligator, and then sees Jim, Amy, and Brookie. "You, uh, you people from Florida?" he asks conversationally.

Brookie, Amy, and Jim turn north on Amsterdam. They get lost in Harlem, and Brookie tells Amy to ask a young man shivering and hugging himself in the cold outside a cash machine how to get to Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard.

Amy leaps out of the van. "Hey, Mister!" she calls out cheerfully. "Which way to Adam Clayton Powell?"

The man recoils into a crouch. Then he sees Amy's quizzical, innocent expression. "Hey, Christ, you *scared* me!" he says, relief filling his face. "*God*, you scared me."

He tells her how to get to Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, and there they put out the next-to-last alligator.

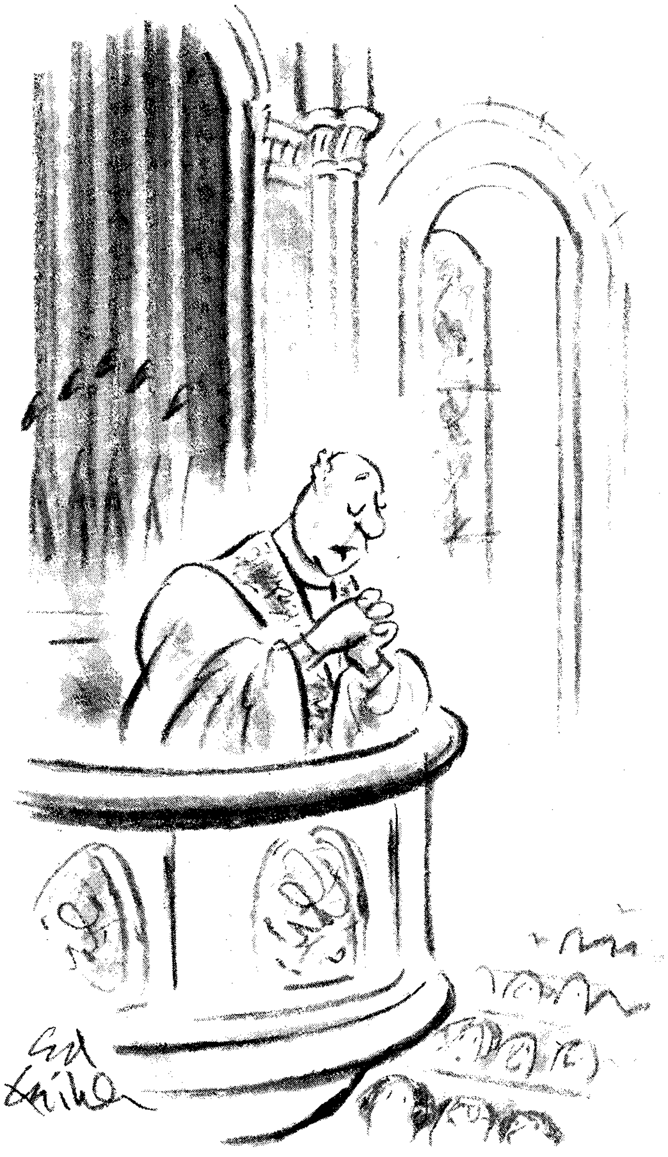
Their last stop is at 123rd Street and Second Avenue, which was the site of that 1935 alligator spotting, and (as it happens) is near a shelter for homeless children where Brookie has some friends. Brookie forgot to prewire the last alligator, so she has to do that job in the back of the van. It takes a long time. When she has finished, and the alligator is secured to a grate in front of a little grocery store (a drunk watches carefully), she gets back in the van. Jim says, "Hey, we're done! We did it! All gone!"

"I'll tell you what," says Amy. She looks at her watch. It's six-thirty. "Why don't we just drive back down to Grand Central and look at how people are reacting to the alligators there? There ought to be all those commuters coming out by now."

Jim drives down Second Avenue to Forty-second Street and turns right, and they find that one alligator has been run over, squashed flat, but the other one is O.K. People are walking right by it, heads down, intent. Jim drives over to Times Square. The two gators there are gone—not run over, not squashed, just *gone*. They race down to Sheridan Square. Gone. West Broadway and Spring? Gone, too. Nothing on Wall Street, nothing at the World Trade Center. Sometime between three o'clock and seven o'clock, practically every alligator in the piece has been carefully untethered and taken away. (The one at Seventy-second and Broadway survived until ten-thirty.) It's as though some other artist had been following right behind them, in another van, collecting the alligators as carefully and lovingly as they had released them.

Jim says, "It's like when you leave furniture on the street—sofas and chairs, and stuff—and ten minutes later it's gone. Whoosh! It's like there's a million eyes watching everywhere in New York, and they want things."

"It's O.K." Brookie says. "The alligator piece was always going to be a little bit about letting go."



"And forgive even those who prevented us from selling our air rights."

Motivation Tool

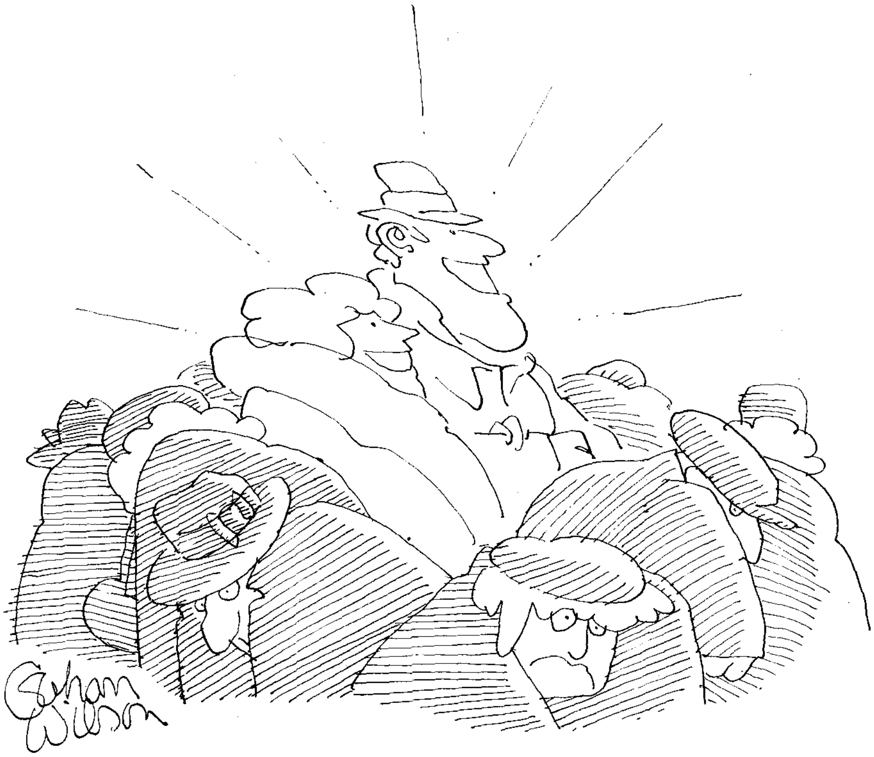
IF you start with the cold cuts—twenty-eight dollars at the door entitles you to the cold cuts, white bread, mayo or mustard, half-sour pickles, coleslaw, potato salad, chilled raw celery and carrots and cauliflower and olives (what used to be called the relish tray in the good old restaurants), cookies, coffee, soft drinks, no alcohol, plus Gerald August's presentation on "How to Use Humor in Your Speeches"—you can possibly get them smiling although not quite laughing, but then you can't slow down, you've got to kee the ball in play. One way t do that is to go right up t

Jonathan Evetts, the president of the Metropolitan New York chapter of the National Speakers Association (N.S.A.), whose members gather the second Wednesday every month in the Summit Hotel, a hotel that will never have an ounce less grandeur than it has at this very moment. You go right up to Jonathan Evetts, who does sales training and consulting (and, on the side, writes occasional articles for *Personal Selling Power*) and is now in the middle of a six-month consultation with a vinyl-binder manufacturer, and he explains the purpose of the N.S.A., which is to "shorten the learning curve" and make it possible for any diligent self-motivator someday to be ike Nido R. Qubein, an N.S.A. member who earns a million dollars a year peaking on aspects of management to Fortune 500 companies and who is liv-ng testimony to the greatness you can achieve in the public-speaking business ven if you have come to this country s a penniless Lebanese immigrant.

Then, assuming that the audience is till with you, you bring in Gerald Gerry) August, who used to be in dvertising but is now a full-time ommunications consultant, and who nows how to gesture and smile as he efines the difference between comedy nd humor ("Comedy is Bob Hope or ill Cosby. Humor is a tool to help motivate"). If you feel comfortable uoting Gerry August, who says, "I would like to close on a personal note: think you should use humor because umor makes people laugh," you'll robably want to pass along his suggestion that you can dig up some humor if you go to the library and check ut a few old books, because chances re you'll find some stuff in there that o one has thought of recently.

Now you're nearing the halfway ark, always a crucial moment in any esentation. A lot of choices confront ou, and you want to make the right ove. You ask yourself: Would it ake sense to backtrack to the point rlier in the program when everyone ood up and, in fifteen seconds or less, scribed himself or herself (psycholo-st/trainer in stress management; orts chiropractor; Gestalt therapist/anagement consultant; specialist in trepreneurship, wellness, and wom-'s issues; engineer/computer jockey/arketing specialist; sociologist who es to lecture about burnout preven-n, sex and power, stress manage-ent, time management)? Or would it better to fast-forward to Professor Estelle Aden, who teaches speech at Hofstra University and is always happy to share her thoughts about the dynamics of voice, and who herself possesses a voice that she could rent out as a public-address system in a big-league ballpark? Because Professor Estelle Aden manages to talk for an hour without once deliberately employing humor (unless you want to count the voice exercise that involves everyone's turning to the person seated next to him and saying, again and again, shifting the emphasis this way and that, "*Great* return" and "*Real*ly" and "*Fab*ulous"), there would be no harm in leaving her out entirely.

If you're running out of space, you can also skip the part where Sandra Fisher, the co-chairperson of the Programs Committee of the Metropolitan New York chapter of the N.S.A., coaches everyone in how to stand up and say "Wow!"—that's what they say when they really enjoy something, like a Gerry August speech or a door-prize drawing—and you focus your attention across the room, where you notice that during the stretch-and-refresh break Elliot Essman, the president of Incurable Romantix (his business cards identify him as a for-hire provider of "personalized love letters, customized romance novels, personal appearances"), is having a conversation with Melissa Sands, a writer, who is not a member of the N.S.A. but has come to the meeting with her friend Dr. Duffy Spencer, the sociologist who likes to lecture about burnout prevention, sex and power, stress management, time management. Elliot Essman, it turns out, is a twice-divorced former lawyer/taxi driver/rock musician/term-paper ghost-writer/Danish-shock-absorber-plant worker. Melissa Sands is the author of five books—"The Mistress' Survival Manual" (a classic, stayed in print for six years), "The Making of the American Mistress," "The Passion Factor: How to Handle Love and Sex at Work," "How to Be a Winner at Love" (published in paperback as "Look Before You Love"), and "The Second Wife's Survival Manual." She is discussing with Elliot Essman her fascinating corporate seminar "Sexual Chemistry: What You Don't Know Can Burn Up Your Career." Unfortunately, however, unless you have actually overheard the conversation between Elliot Essman and Melissa Sands you cannot quote any dialogue from it. So that's where you need to fall back on your imagination.



THE COUPLE WHO DIDN'T COME DOWN WITH THE FLU

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PENTECOST SUNDAY

IT was inevitable: the scent of bitter almonds always reminded Dr. Juvenal Urbino of the fate of unrequited love. He noticed the smell as soon as he entered the still, darkened house where he had hurried on an urgent call to attend to a case that for him had lost all urgency many years before. The Antillean refugee Jeremiah de Saint-Amour, disabled war veteran, photographer of children, and Dr. Urbino's most sympathetic chess opponent, had escaped the torments of memory with the aromatic fumes of gold cyanide.

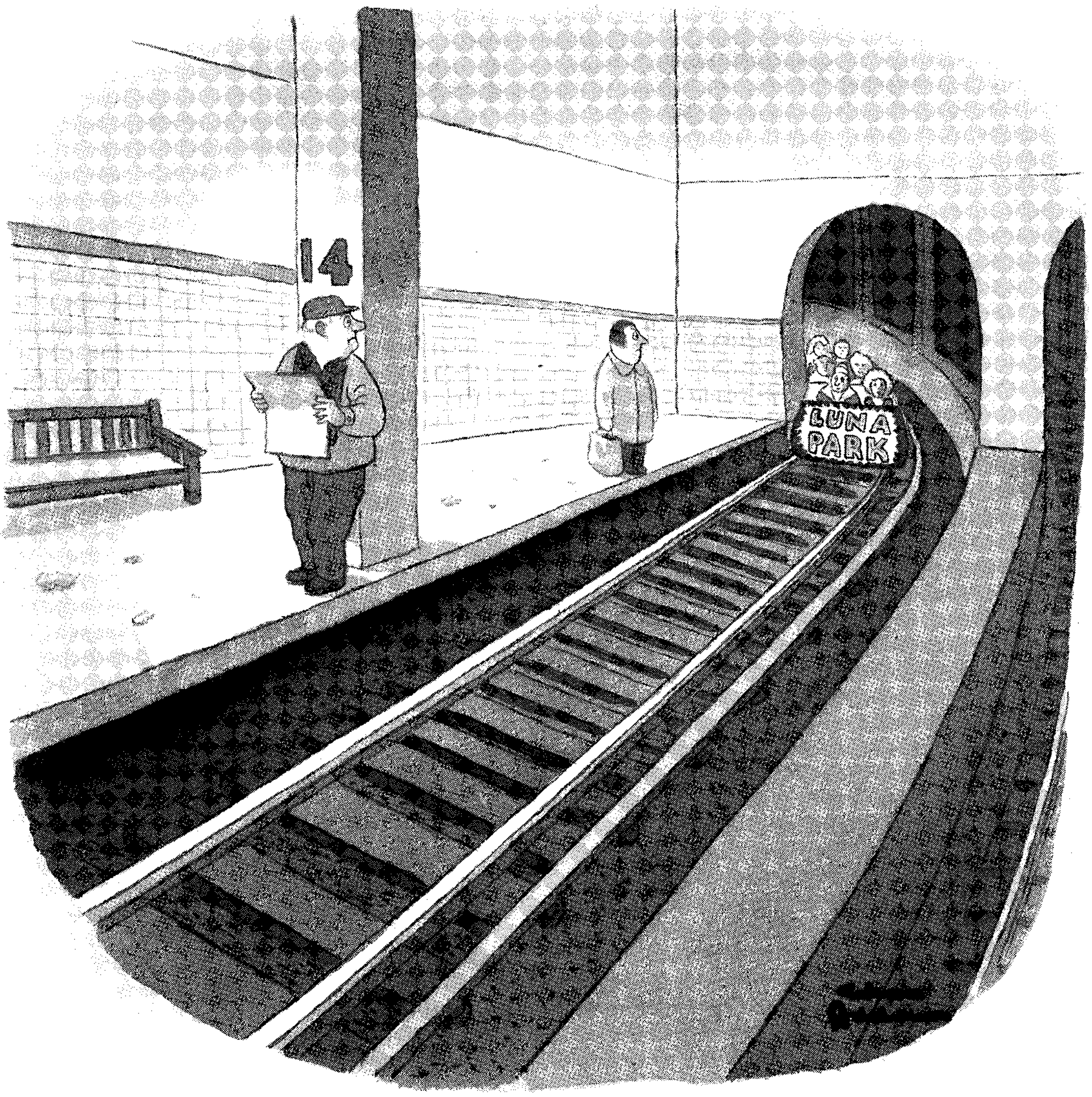
He found the corpse covered with a blanket on the campaign cot where Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had always slept, and beside it was a stool with a developing tray, in which he had vaporized the poison. On the floor, tied to a leg of the cot, lay the body of a black Great Dane with a snow-white chest, and next to the dog was a pair of crutches. At one window, the splendor of dawn was just beginning to illuminate the stifling, crowded room, which served as both bedroom and laboratory, but there was enough light for Dr. Urbino to recognize at once the authority of death. The other windows, as well as every other chink in the room, were muffled with rags or sealed with black cardboard, which increased the oppressive heaviness. A counter was crammed with jars and bottles without labels, and under an ordinary light bulb covered with red paper were two crumbling pewter trays. The third tray, for the fixative solution, was the one next to the body. There were old magazines and newspapers everywhere, piles of negatives on glass plates, pieces of broken furniture, but everything had been diligently kept free of dust. The air coming through the window had purified the atmosphere, but anyone who knew what the smell of bitter almonds meant could still identify the dying embers of hapless love. Dr. Juvenal Urbino had often thought, with no premonitory intention, that this room was not a propitious place for dying in the state of grace. But in time he came to suppose that perhaps the room's disorder obeyed an obscure determination of Divine Providence.

"To begin with, do you have all your receipts?"

A police inspector and a very young medical student who was completing his forensic training at the municipal dispensary had ventilated the room and covered the body while waiting for Dr. Urbino to arrive. They came forward and greeted him with a solemnity that on this occasion held more condolence than veneration, for no one was unaware of the degree of his friendship with Jeremiah de Saint-Amour. He shook hands with them, as he did with each of his pupils before beginning his daily class in general clinical medicine, and then, as if it were a flower, he grasped the hem of the blanket with the tips of his index finger and his thumb and slowl uncovered the body with sacramenta circumspection. Jeremiah de Saint-Amour was completely naked, stiff an twisted, eyes open, body blue, lookin fifty years older than he had the nigh before. He had luminous pupils, a yel lowish beard and hair, and, across hi stomach, an old scar where he ha been sewn with baling knots. Usin crutches had made his torso and arm as broad as a galley slave's, but hi defenseless legs looked like an orphan's. Dr. Juvenal Urbino studie him for a moment, his heart aching a it rarely had in the long years of Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's futile struggle against death.

"Damn fool," he said. "The wor was over."

He covered the body again with th blanket and regained his academ dignity. His eightieth birthday ha been celebrated the year before, wit an official three-day jubilee, and in h thank-you speech he had once agai resisted the temptation to retire. H had said: "I'll have plenty of time rest when I die, but this eventuality not yet part of my plans." Althoug he heard less and less with his rig ear and leaned on a silver-handle cane to conceal his faltering step he continued to wear a linen suit wi a gold watch chain across his ve as smartly as he had in his young years. His Pasteur beard, the col of mother-of-pearl, and his hair, t same color and carefully combed ba and neatly parted in the middle, we faithful expressions of his characte He compensated as much as he cou for an increasingly disturbing erosi of memory by scribbling hurried no on scraps of paper, which ended



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confusion in each of his pockets, like the instruments, the bottles of medicine, and all the other things jumbled together in his crowded medical bag. He was not only the city's oldest and most illustrious physician, he was also its most fastidious man. Still, his too obvious display of learning and the disingenuous manner in which he used the power of his name had won him less affection than he deserved.

His instructions to the inspector and the interne were precise and rapid. There was no need for an autopsy; the odor in the house was sufficient proof that the cause of death had been cyanide vapors activated in the tray by some photographic acid, and Jeremiah de Saint-Amour knew too much about those matters for it to have been an accident. When the inspector showed some hesitation, he cut him off with the kind of remark that was typical of his manner: "Don't forget that I am the one who signs the death certificate." The young doctor was disappointed: he had never had the opportunity to study the effects of gold cyanide on a cadaver. Dr. Juvenal Urbino was surprised that he had not seen him at the medical school, but he understood in an instant from the young man's easy blush and Andean accent that he was probably a recent arrival to the city. He said: "There is bound to be someone driven mad by love who will give you the chance one of these days." And only after he said it did he realize that among the countless cyanide suicides he could remember this was the first that had not been caused by the sufferings of love. Then something in the tone of his voice changed. "And when you do find one, observe with care," he said to the interne. "They almost always have crystals in their heart."

Then he spoke to the inspector as if to a subordinate. He ordered him to circumvent all the legal procedures so that the burial could take place that same afternoon and with the greatest discretion. He said: "I will speak to the Mayor later." He knew that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour lived in primitive austerity and earned much more with his art than he needed, so that in a drawer in the house there was bound to be more than enough money for the funeral expenses. "But if you do not find it, it does not matter," he said. "I will take care of everything."

He ordered the inspector to tell the papers that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had died of natural causes, although he thought the news would in no way interest them. He said: "If it is necessary, I will speak to the Governor." The inspector, a serious and humble civil servant, knew that the Doctor's sense of civic duty exasperated even his closest friends, and he was surprised at the ease with which he skipped over legal formalities in order to expedite the burial. The only thing Dr. Urbino was not willing to do was speak to the Archbishop so that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour could be buried in consecrated ground. The inspector, astonished at his own impertinence, attempted to make excuses for the deceased. "I understood this man was a saint," he said.

"Something even rarer," said Dr. Urbino. "An atheistic saint. But those are matters for God to decide."

In the distance, on the other side of the colonial city, the bells of the cathedral were ringing. Dr. Urbino put on his gold-rimmed half-moon glasses and consulted his pocket watch—slim, elegant, with a cover that opened at a touch. He was about to miss the start of Pentecost Mass.

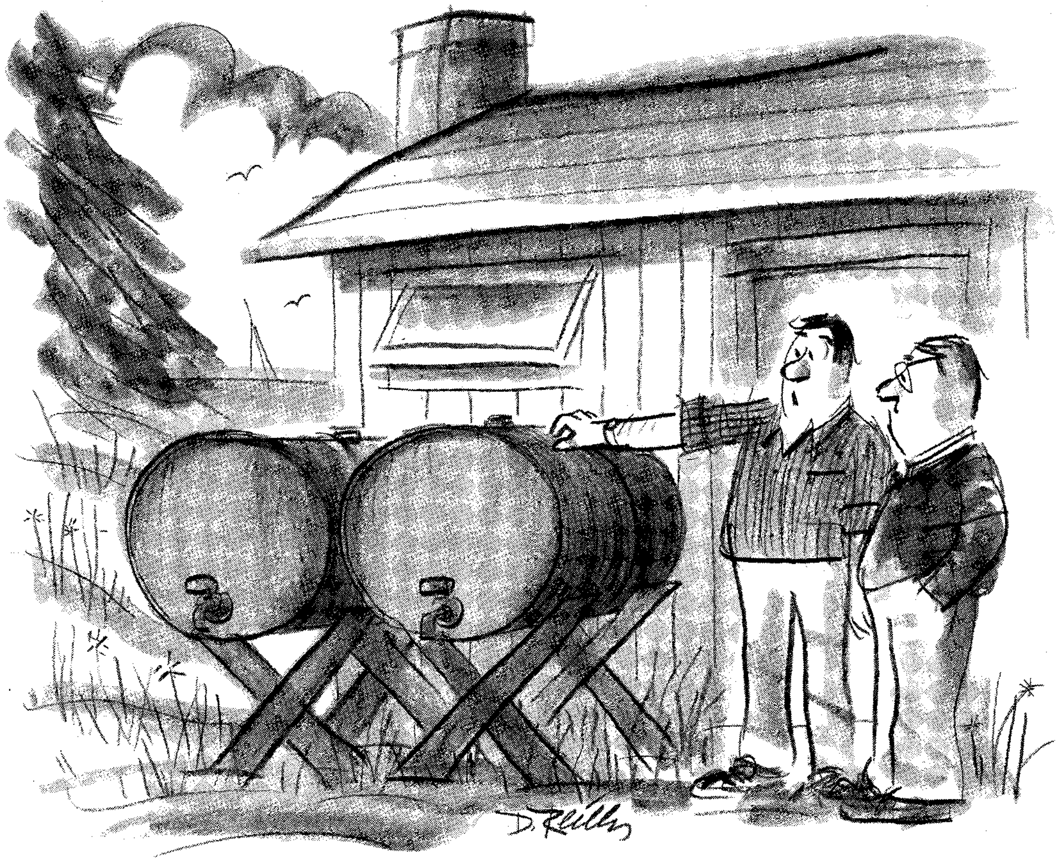
In the parlor was a huge camera on wheels, like the ones used in public parks, and a backdrop of a marine twilight painted with homemade paints. The walls were papered with pictures of children at memorable moments: the First Communion, the bunny costume, the happy birthday. Year after year, during contemplative pauses on afternoons of chess, Dr. Urbino had seen the gradual covering over of the walls, and he had often thought with a shudder of sorrow that in that gallery of casual portraits lay the germ of the future city—governed and corrupted by those unknown children—where not even the ashes of his glory would remain.

On the desk, next to a jar that held several old sea dog's pipes, was the chessboard, with an unfinished game on it. Despite his haste and his sombre mood, Dr. Urbino could not resist the temptation to study the board. He knew the game was from the previous night, for Jeremiah de Saint-Amour played at dusk every day of the week with at least three different opponents, but he always finished each game and then placed the board and chessmen in their box and stored the box in a desk drawer. He always played with the white pieces, the Doctor knew, and this time it was evident that he was going to be defeated in four moves. "If there had been a crime, this would be a good clue," Urbino said to himself. "I know only one man capable of devising this masterly trap."

At six that morning, the night watchman, making his last rounds, had seen a note nailed to the door: "*Come in without knocking* and inform the police." A short while later, the inspector arrived with the interne, and the two of them searched the house for some evidence that might contradict the unmistakable breath of bitter almonds. In the brief minutes the Doctor needed to study the unfinished game, the inspector discovered among the papers on the desk an envelope addressed to Dr. Juvenal Urbino and sealed with so much wax that it had to be ripped to pieces to get the letter out. The Doctor opened the black curtain over the window to have more light and gave a quick glance at the sheets, eleven in all, covered on both sides by a diligent handwriting. As soon as he read the first paragraph, he knew that he would not get to the cathedral before the Gospel reading. He read with agitated breath, turning back on several pages to find a thread he had lost, and when he finished he seemed to return from very far away and very long ago. His despondency was obvious despite his effort to control it: his lips were as blue as the corpse, and he could not stop the trembling of his fingers as he refolded the letter and placed it in his vest pocket. Then he remembered the inspector and the young doctor, and he smiled at them through the mists of grief. "Nothing in particular," he said. "His final instructions."

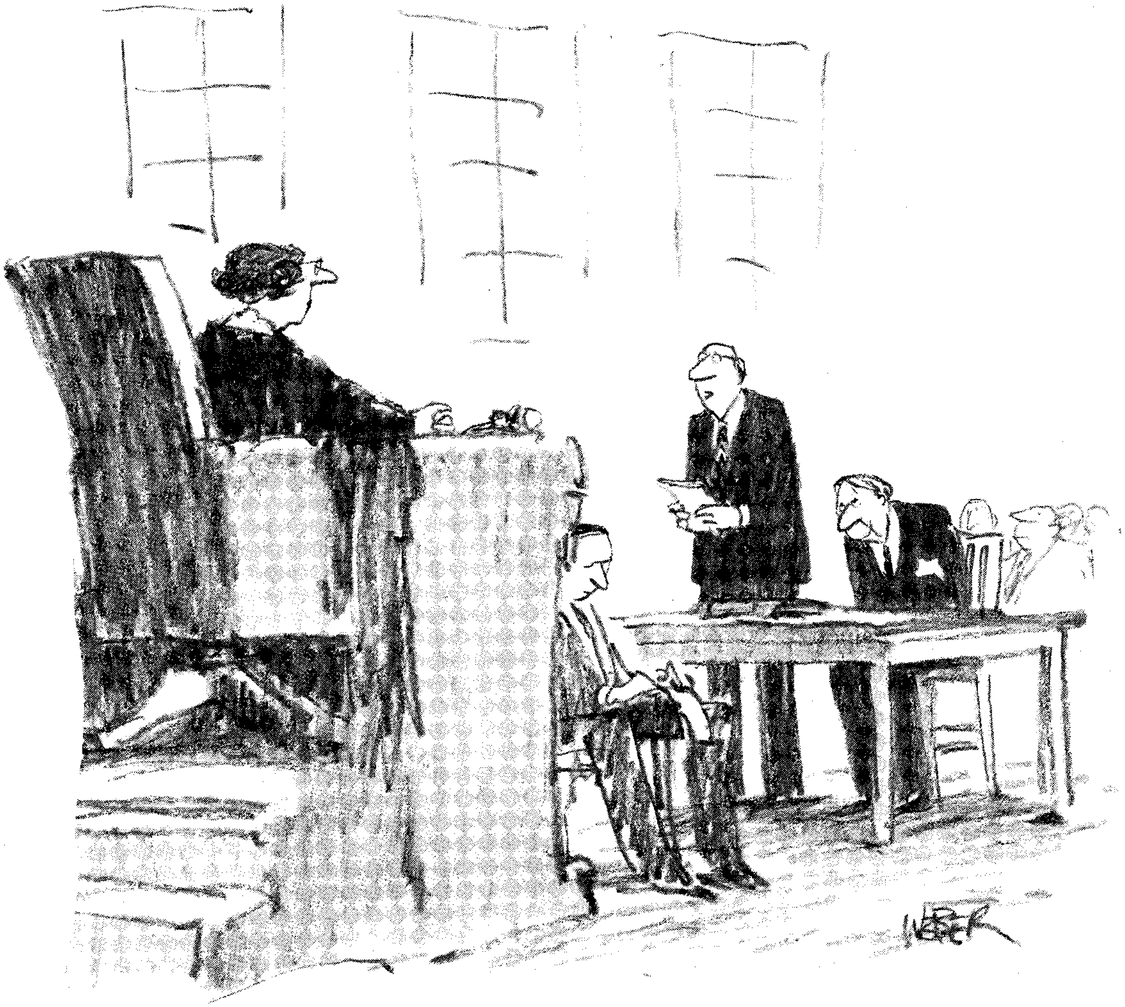
It was a half truth, but they thought it complete, because he ordered them to lift a loose tile from the floor, and underneath they found a worn account book that contained the combination to a strongbox. There was not as much money as they expected, but it was more than enough for the funeral expenses and to meet other minor obligations. Then Dr. Urbino realized that he would miss Pentecost Communion. "It's the third time I've missed Sunday Mass since I've had the use of my reason," he said. "But God understands."

So he chose to spend a few minutes more and attend to all the details, although he could hardly bear his intense longing to share the secrets of the letter with his wife. He promised to notify the city's numerous Caribbean refugees in case they wanted to pay their last respects to the man who had conducted himself as if he were the most respectable of them all—the most active and the most radical—even after it had become all too clear that he had been overwhelmed by the burden of disillusion. He would also inform Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's chess partners, who ranged from distinguished professional men to nameless laborers, as well as other, less intimate acquaintances who might perhaps wish to attend the funeral. Before he read the letter, he had resolved to be first among them, but afterward he was not certain of anything. In any event, he was going to send a wreath of gardenias in case Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had repented at the last moment. The burial would be at five, which was the most



"This one's kerosene, the other's Chardonnay."

suitable hour during the hottest months. If they needed him, from noon on he would be at the country house of Dr. Lácides Olivella, his beloved disciple, who that day was celebrating his silver anniversary in the profession with a formal luncheon.



"Your Honor, my client now realizes that his actions in the Unotek buyout and his transfers of funds to Swiss bank accounts were dreadfully immature."

• •

ONCE the stormy years of his early struggles were over, Dr. Juvenal Urbino had followed a set routine and had achieved a respectability and prestige that had no equal in the province. He arose at the crack of dawn, when he began taking his secret medicines: potassium bromide to raise his spirits, salicylates for the ache in his bones when it rained, ergosterol drops for vertigo, and at night belladonna for sound sleep. He took something every hour, always in secret, because in his long life as a doctor and teacher he had always opposed prescribing palliatives for old age: it was easier for him to bear other people's pains than his own. In his pocket he always carried a little pad of camphor, which, when no one was watching, he inhaled deeply to calm his fear about mixing so many medicines together.

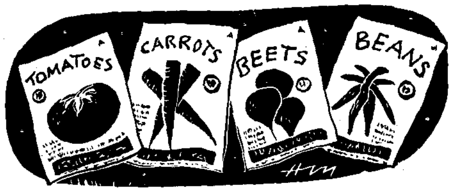
He would spend an hour in his study preparing for the class in general clinical medicine that he taught at the medical school every morning, Monday through Saturday, at eight o'clock, until the day before his death. He was also an avid reader of the latest books from France, which his bookeller in Paris mailed to him, and the ones from Barcelona, which his local bookseller ordered for him, although he did not follow Spanish literature as closely as French. But he never ead them in the morning—only for n hour after his siesta and at night efore he went to sleep. When he was finished in the study, he did fifteen minutes of respiratory exercises in front of the open window in the athroom, always breathing toward the side where the roosters were crowing, which was where the air was new. Then he bathed, in an atmosphere saturated with genuine cologne water from Farina Gegenüber, and arranged his beard and waxed his mustache, and dressed in white linen, with a vest and a soft hat, and cordovan boots.

He almost always ate lunch at home and had a ten-minute siesta on the terrace in the patio, hearing in his sleep the songs of the servant girls under the leaves of the mango trees, the cries of venders on the street, the uproar of motors from the bay, whose exhaust fumes fluttered through the house on hot afternoons like an angel condemned to putrefaction. Then he read his new books for an hour—above all, novels and works of history—and gave lessons in French and singing to the tame parrot, who had been a local attraction for years. At four o'clock, after drinking a large glass of iced lemonade, he left to call on his patients. In spite of his age, he would not see patients in his office and continued to care for them in their homes as he always had, since the city was so domesticated that one could go anywhere in safety.

After he returned from Europe the first time, he used the family landau drawn by two golden chestnuts, but when this was no longer practical he changed to a victoria and a single horse, and he continued to use this, with a certain disdain for fashion, when the only carriages left in the city were for giving rides to tourists and carrying wreaths at funerals. His carriage was distinguishable from the handful of others because the patent-leather roof was always kept polished, and it had fittings of bronze, which could not be corroded by salt, and wheels and poles painted red with gilt trimming, reminiscent of gala nights at the Vienna Opera. Furthermore, while the most demanding families were satisfied if their coachmen had a clean shirt, he still required his to wear livery of faded velvet and a top hat like a circus ringmaster's. This was regarded as more than an anachronism—it was thought to show a lack of compassion in the dog days of the Caribbean summer.

After he refused to retire, Dr. Urbino was aware that he was called in only for hopeless cases, but he considered this a form of specialization. He could tell what was wrong with a patient just by looking at him, he grew more and more distrustful of patent medicines, and he viewed with alarm the vulgarization of surgery. He would say: "The scalpel is the greatest proof of the failure of medicine." He thought that, strictly speaking, all medication was poison and that seventy per cent of common foods hastened death. "In any case," he would say in class, "the little medicine we know is known only by a few doctors." From youthful enthusiasm he had moved to a position that he defined as fatalistic humanism: "Each man is master of his own death, and all that we can do when the time comes is to help him die without fear or pain."

His daily schedule was so methodical that his wife knew where to send him a message if an emergency arose in the course of the afternoon. When he was a young man, he would stop in the Parish Café before coming home, and this was where he perfected his chess game, with his father-in-law's cronies and some Caribbean refugees. But he had not returned to the café since the dawn of the new century, and had attempted to organize national tournaments under the sponsorship of the Social Club. It was at this time that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour arrived, his knees already dead, and in less than three months everyone who knew how to move a bishop across a chessboard knew who he was, because no one had been able to defeat him. For Dr. Juvenal Urbino, it was a miraculous meeting, happening at the very moment when chess had become an unconquerable passion for him and he no longer had many opponents who could satisfy it. Thanks to him, Jeremiah de Saint-Amour could become what he was among us. Dr. Urbino made himself Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's unconditional protector, his guarantor in everything, without even taking the trouble to learn who he was or what he did or what inglorious wars he had come from in his crippled, broken state. Dr. Urbino eventually lent him the money to set up his photography studio, and from the time he took his first picture of a child startled by the magnesium flash, Jeremiah de Saint-Amour paid him back, with religious regularity, to the last penny.



It was all for chess. At first they played after supper, at seven o'clock, with a reasonable handicap for Jeremiah de Saint-Amour, because of Dr. Urbino's notable superiority, but the handicap was reduced until at last they played as equals. Later, when Don Galileo Daconte opened the first outdoor cinema, Jeremiah de Saint-Amour was one of his most dependable customers, and the chess games were limited to the nights when a new film

A WORDED WELCOME

Afloat within
an empty sea, and seemingly at home
up there, and floating, too, down here, inside the twin
circles of my binoculars, he ventures quite
without support, since the lifelines
that bond him to that bright
expansive dome

above his head
remain, no matter how I squint and strain,
invisible. Just so: a man's deposited
upon a throne of air, and while he finds it ample,
finds, too, it will not hold him—just.
The resolution's simple:
he must come down,

then. Down through stacked
transparencies, the inward march of far
horizons, he drops—valleys, hills, and meadows cracked
by stationary streams, farms, fences, dots of wool
like waiting building blocks of cloud . . .
No more removable
than the days are

that separate
yearning from some long-planned red-letter day
is each of the one-metre rungs upon that great
notional ladder which attaches him to us;
each outlays its own vista; each is
a sort of terminus
along the way.

Rate, route are set—
the vectored clash of wind and gravitation
fixes the exact details of his arrival. Yet,
from where he loosely stands, views breathlessly would quicken:
blurred trees come crisply into leaf,
a lazing stream awaken
lightly, to motion

throughout a place
whose every glancing form grows sharper-edged—
detail within detail until, with an embrace
whose ardor pops the massive thought-balloon above
his little head, he meets, as pledged,
the rich, soiled earnest of
a peopled world.

—Brad Leithauser

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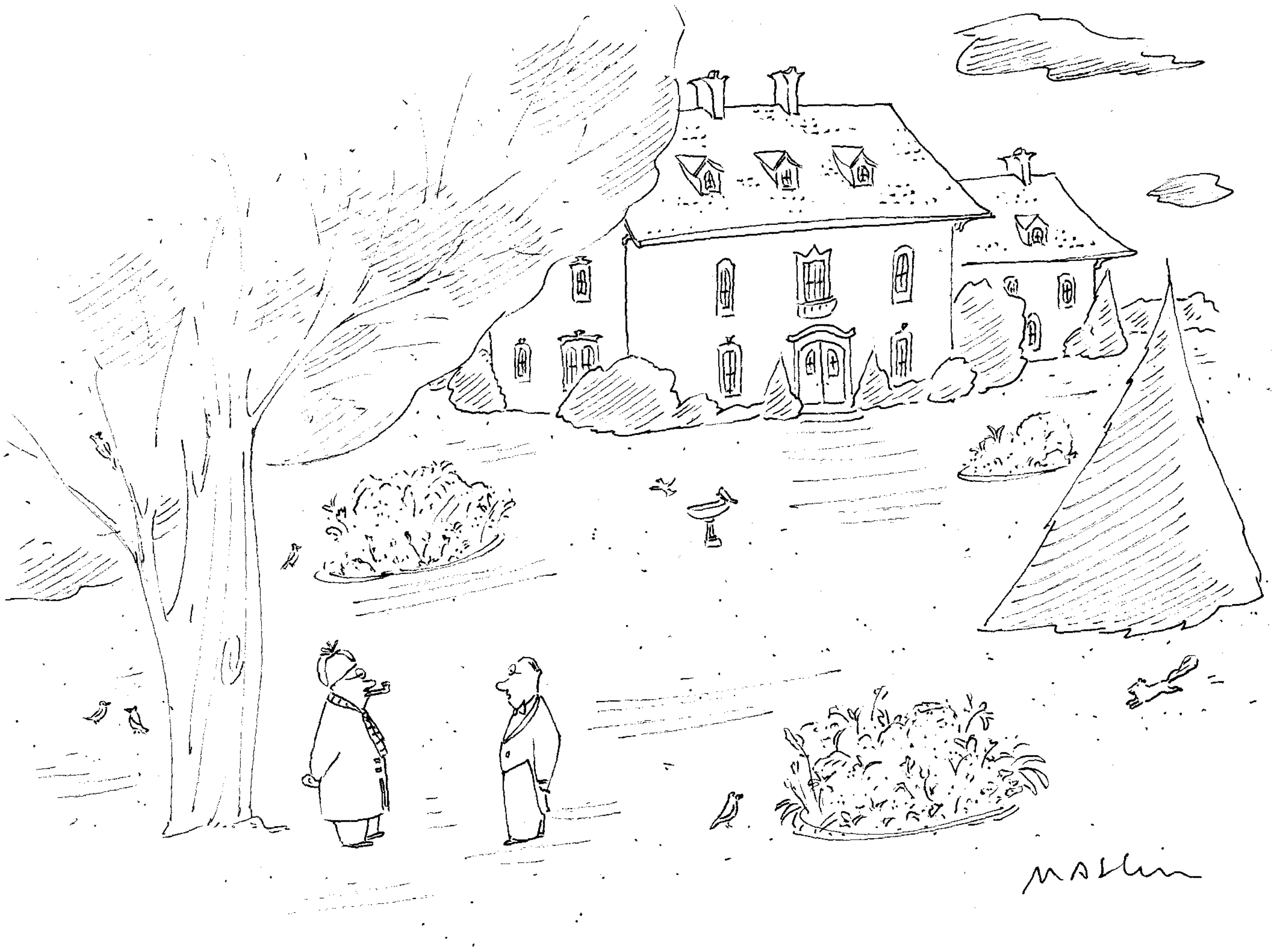


"It's spring, sir. May I take your hat and coat?"

• •

was not being shown. By then he and the Doctor had become such good friends that they would go to see the films together, but never with the Doctor's wife—in part because she did not have the patience to follow the complicated plot lines, and in part because it always seemed to her, through sheer intuition, that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour was not a good companon for anyone.

Dr. Urbino's Sundays were different. He would attend High Mass at he cathedral and then return home to rest and read on the terrace in the patio. He seldom visited a patient on a holy day of obligation unless it was xtremely urgent, and for many years he had not accepted a social engagement that was not obligatory. On this Pentecost, by a rare coincidence, two xtraordinary events had occurred: the eath of a friend and the silver anniersary of an eminent pupil. Yet, after ertifying the death of Jeremiah de aint-Amour, Dr. Urbino, instead of oing straight home, as he had intended, allowed himself to be carried along by curiosity.

As soon as he was in his carriage, he consulted the letter and told the coachman to take him to an obscure location in the old slave quarter. That decision was so unusual that the coachman wanted to make certain there was no mistake. No, no mistake: the address was clear, and the man who had written it had more than enough reason to know it very well. Then Dr. Urbino returned to the first page of the letter and plunged once again into a flood of unsavory revelations that might have changed his life, even at his age, if he could have convinced himself that they were not the ravings of a dying man.

The sky had begun to threaten very early in the day, and the weather was cloudy and cool, but there was no chance of rain before noon. In his effort to find a shorter route, the coachman braved the rough cobblestones of the colonial city and had to stop often to keep the horse from being frightened by the rowdiness of the religious societies and fraternities coming back from the Pentecost Liturgy. The streets were full of paper garlands, music, and flowers, and girls with colored parasols and muslin ruffles watched the celebration from their balconies. In the Plaza of the Cathedral, where the statue of the Liberator was almost hidden among the African palm trees and the globes of the new street lights, traffic was congested because Mass had ended, and not a seat was empty in the venerable and noisy Parish Café.

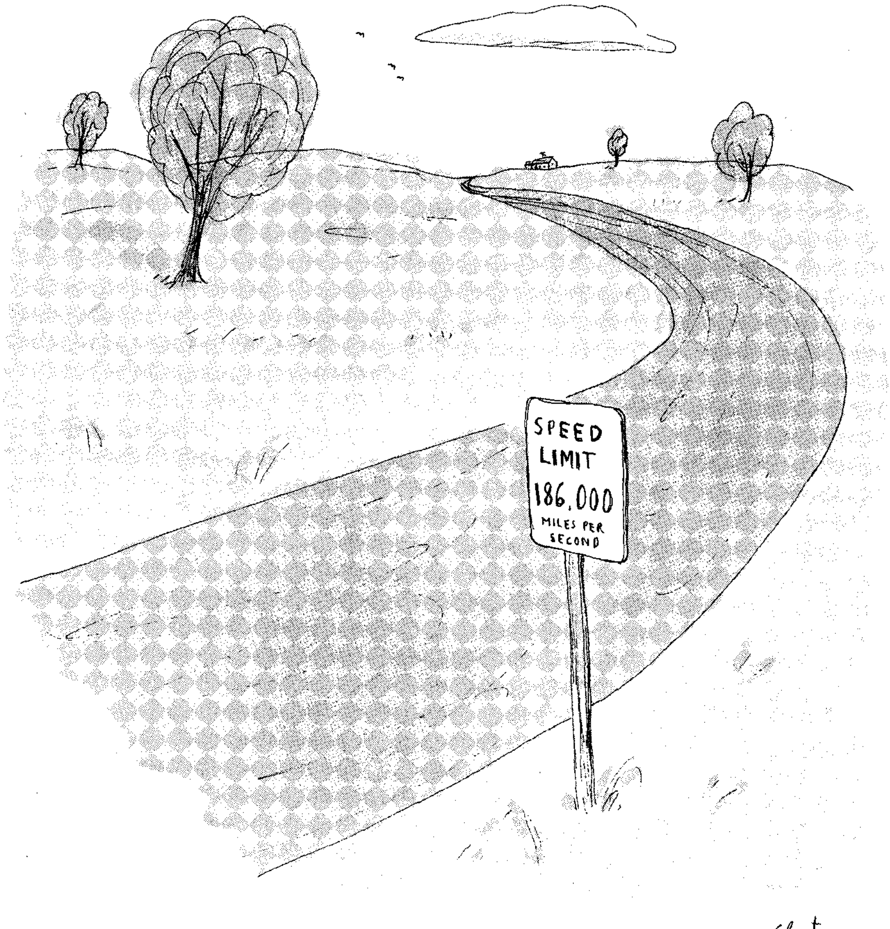
Despite his almost maniacal love of the city and his knowledge of it, which was superior to anyone's, Dr. Juvenal Urbino had not often had reason to venture boldly into the tumult of the old slave quarter. The coachman had to make many turns and frequently stop to ask directions. By the time they found the house, gangs of ragged children were chasing the carriage and ridiculing the theatrical finery of the coachman, who had to drive them away with his whip. Dr. Urbino, prepared for a confidential visit, realized too late that there was no innocence more dangerous than the innocence of age.

The exterior of the house was in no way distinguishable from those of its less fortunate neighbors, except for a window with lace curtains and an imposing front door taken from some old church. The coachman pounded on the knocker, and only when he had made certain that it was the right house did he help the Doctor out of the carriage. The door opened without a sound, and in the shadowy interior stood a mature woman dressed in black and with a red rose behind her ear. Despite her age, which was no less than forty, she was still a haughty mulatta, with cruel golden eyes and with hair that clung to her skull like a helmet of steel wool. Dr. Urbino did not recognize her, although he had seen her several times in the gloom of the photographer's studio during chess games, and had once written her a prescription for tertian fever. He held out his hand, and she took it between both of hers, less in greeting than to help him into the house. The parlor had the look and feel of a forest glade and was crammed with furniture and exquisite objects, each in its natural place. The woman sat down across from him and spoke in accented Spanish. "This is your house, Doctor," she said. "I did not expect you so soon."

Dr. Urbino felt betrayed. He stared at her openly, at her intense mourning, at the dignity of her grief, and then he understood that this was a useless visit, because she knew more than he did about everything in Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's letter. This was true. She had been with him until a very few hours before his death—as she had been with him for almost twenty years, with a devotion and submissive tenderness that bore too close a resemblance to love, and without anyone's knowing anything about it in this sleepy provincial capital, where even state secrets were common knowledge. They had met in a convalescent home in Port-au-Prince, where she was born and where he had spent his early years as a fugitive, and she had followed him here a year later for a brief visit, although both of them knew, without agreeing to anything, that she had come to stay forever. She cleaned and straightened the laboratory once a week, but not even the most evil-minded neighbors confused appearance with reality, because they, like everyone else, supposed that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's disability affected more than his power to walk. Dr. Urbino himself supposed as much, for solid medical reasons, and would never have believed his friend had a woman if he had not revealed it in the letter. In any event, it was difficult for him to comprehend that two free adults without a past and living on the fringes of a closed society's prejudices had chosen the hazards of illicit love. She explained: "It was his wish." Moreover, the clandestine life shared with a man who was never completely hers, but in which they often knew the sudden explosion of happiness, did not seem to her a condition to be despised. On the contrary: life had shown her that perhaps it was exemplary.

On the previous night, they had gone to the cinema, separately, and had sat apart, as they had done at least twice a month since the Italian immigrant Don Galileo Daconte had installed his open-air theatre in the ruins of a seventeenth-century convent. They saw "All Quiet on the Western Front," a film based on a book that had been popular the year before and that Dr. Urbino had read, his heart devastated by the barbarism of war. They met afterward in the laboratory; she found him brooding and nostalgic, and thought it was because of the brutal scenes of wounded men dying in the mud. In an attempt to distract him, she invited him to play chess and to please her he accepted, but he played inattentively—with the white pieces, of course—until he discovered before she did that he was going to be defeated in four moves and surrendered without honor. Then the Doctor realized that she had been Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's opponent in the final game, and not, as he had supposed, General Jerónimo Argote. He murmured in astonishment: "It was masterly!"

She insisted that she deserved no praise but, rather, that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour, already lost in the mists of death, had moved the pieces without love. When he stopped the game, at about a quarter past eleven, for the music from the public dances had ended, he asked her to leave him. He wanted to write a letter to Dr. Juvena Urbino, whom he considered the mos honorable man he had ever known



"What's the tab on this bouillabaisse?"

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and his soul's friend, as he liked to say, even though the only affinity between them was their addiction to chess, understood as a dialogue of reason and not a science. And then she knew that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had come to the end of his suffering and that he had only enough life left to write the letter. The Doctor could not believe it. "So then you knew!" he exclaimed.

She not only knew, she said, but she had helped him to endure the suffering as lovingly as she had helped him to discover happiness. Because that was what his last eleven months had been: cruel suffering.

"Your duty was to report him," said the Doctor.

"I could not do that," she said, shocked. "I loved him too much."

Dr. Urbino, who thought he had heard everything, had never heard anything like that, and it was said with such simplicity. He looked straight at her and tried with all his senses to fix her in his memory as she was at that moment: she seemed like a river idol, undaunted in her black dress, with her serpent's eyes and the rose behind her ear.

A long time ago, on a deserted beach in Haiti, where the two of them lay naked after love, Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had sighed, "I will never be old." She interpreted this as a heroic determination to struggle without quarter against the ravages of time, but he was more specific: he had made the irrevocable decision to take his own life when he was seventy years old.

He had turned seventy, in fact, on January 23rd of that year, and then he set the date as the night before Pentecost, the most important holiday in a city consecrated to the cult of the Holy Spirit. There was not a single detail that she had not known ahead of time, and they spoke of it often, suffering together the irreparable rush of days that neither of them could stop now. Jeremiah de Saint-Amour loved life with a senseless passion—he loved the sea and love, he loved his dog and her—and as the date approached he gradually succumbed to despair, as if his death had been not his own decision but an inexorable destiny.

"Last night, when I left him, he was no longer of this world," she said.

She had wanted to take the dog with her, but he looked at the animal, dozing beside the crutches, and caressed him with the tips of his fingers. He said: "I'm sorry, but Mr. Woodrow Wilson is coming with me." He asked her to tie the dog to the leg of the cot while he wrote, and she used a false knot so that the dog could free himself. That had been her only act of disloyalty, and it was justified by her desire to remember the master in the wintry eyes of his dog. But Dr. Urbino interrupted her to say that the dog had not freed himself. She said: "Then it was because he did not want to." And she was glad, because she preferred to evoke her dead lover as he had asked her to when he stopped writing the letter and looked at her for the last time. "Remember me with a rose," he said to her.

She had returned home a little after midnight. She lay down fully dressed on her bed, to smoke one cigarette after another, and give him time to finish what she knew was a long and difficult letter. A little before three o'clock, when the dogs began to howl, she put the water for coffee on the stove, dressed in full mourning, and cut the first rose of dawn in the patio. Dr. Urbino already realized how completely he would repudiate the memory of that irredeemable woman, and he thought he knew why: only a person without principles could be so complaisant toward grief.

And for the remainder of the visit she gave him even more justification. She would not go to the funeral, for that is what she had promised her lover, although Dr. Urbino thought he had read just the opposite in one of the paragraphs of the letter. She would not shed a tear, she would not waste the rest of her years simmering in the maggot broth of memory, she would not bury herself alive inside these four walls and sew her shroud, as native widows were expected to do. She intended to sell Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's house and all its contents, which, according to the letter, now belonged to her, and she would go on living as she always had, without complaining, in this death trap of the poor, where she had been happy.

The words pursued Dr. Juvenal Urbino on the drive home. "This death trap of the poor." It was not a gratuitous description. In winter, sudden devastating downpours flooded the latrines and turned the streets into sickening bogs. In summer, an invisible dust as harsh as red-hot chalk was blown into even the best-protected corners of the imagination by mad winds that took the roofs off the houses and carried children away through the air. On Saturdays, the poor mulattoes, along with all their domestic animals and kitchen utensils, abandoned their hovels of cardboard and tin on the edges of the swamps and in a jubilant assault took over the rocky beaches of the colonial district. Until a few years ago some of the older ones had borne the royal slave brand burned onto their chests with flaming irons. During the weekend they danced without mercy, drank themselves blind on home-brewed alcohol, made love among the icaco plants, and on Sunday at midnight they broke up their own party with bloody free-for-alls. During the rest of the week the same impetuous mob swarmed into the plazas and alleys of the old neighborhoods, where the stores had everything that could be bought or sold, and they infused the dead city with the frenzy of a human fair reeking of fried fish: new life.

Independence from Spain and then the abolition of slavery precipitated the conditions of honorable decadence in which Dr. Juvenal Urbino had been born and raised. The great old families sank into their ruined palaces in silence. Along the rough cobbled streets that had served so well in surprise attacks and buccaneer landings, weeds hung from the balconies and opened cracks in the whitewashed walls of even the best-kept mansions, and the only signs of life at two o'clock in the afternoon were languid piano exercises played in the dim light of *siesta*. Indoors, in cool bedrooms saturated with incense, women protected themselves from the sun as if it were a shameful infection, and even at early Mass they hid their faces in their mantillas.

SPRING AT THE EDGE OF THE SONNET

Late March and I'm still lighting fires—

last night's frost, which killed the new
shoots of ivy in the terra-cotta churn,
has turned the fields of wheat and winter barley

to icy slates on the hills rising
outside the windows of our living room.

Still, there are signs of change. Soon
the roofs of cars, which last month were
oracles of ice and unthawed dawns,

will pass by, veiled in blooms from
the wild plum they parked under overnight.

Last night, as I drove from town,
the dark was in and the lovers were
out in doorways, using them as windbreaks,
making shadows seem nothing more than

sweet exchequers for a homeless kiss.

—Eavan Boland

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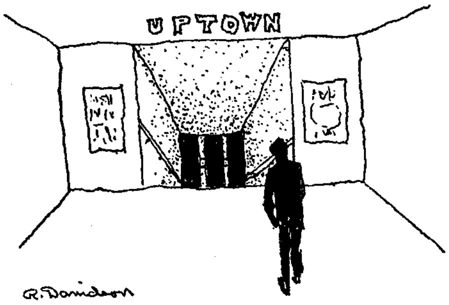
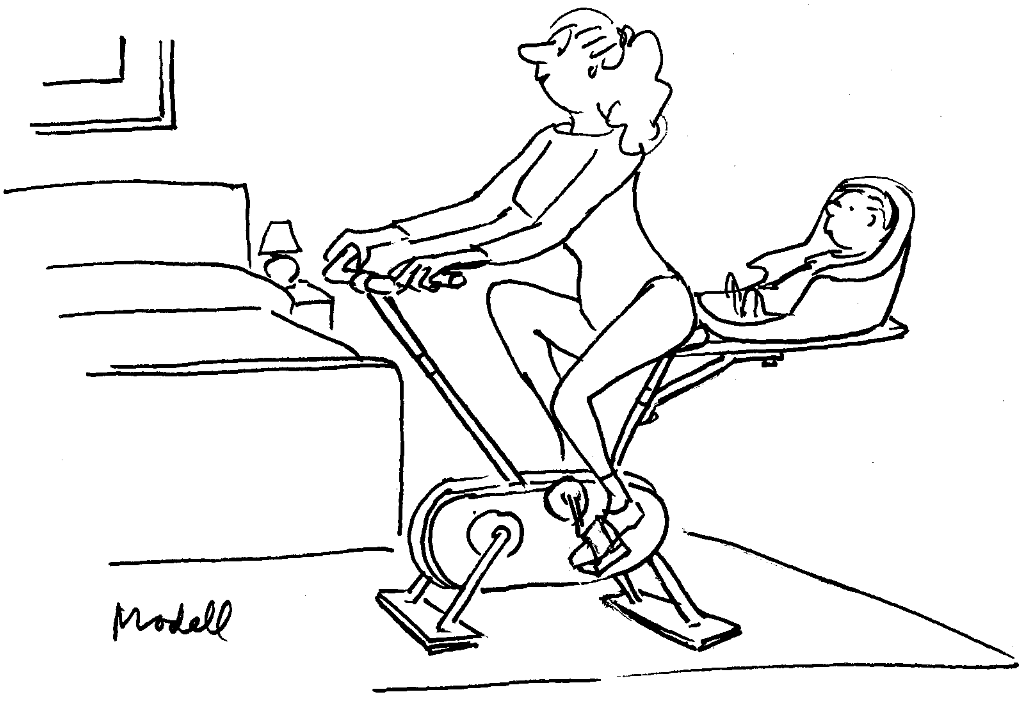
In the eighteenth century the city had been the most prosperous in the Caribbean, owing in the main to the thankless privilege of its being the largest African slave market in the Americas. It was also the permanent residence of the viceroys of the New Kingdom of Granada, who preferred to govern here on the shores of the world's ocean rather than in the distant, freezing capital under a centuries-old drizzle that disturbed their sense of reality. Several times a year fleets of galleons carrying the treasures of Potosí and Quito gathered in the bay, and the city relived its years of glory. On Friday, June 8, 1708, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the galleon San José set sail for Cádiz with a cargo of precious stones and metals valued at half a billion pesos in the currency of the day; it was sunk by an English squadron at the entrance to the port, and two long centuries later it had not yet been salvaged. That treasure lying in its bed of coral and the corpse of the commander floating sideways were evoked by historians as an emblem of the city drowned in memories.



ACROSS the bay, in the residential district of La Manga, Dr. Juvenal Urbino's house stood in another time. One story, spacious and cool, it had a portico with Doric columns on the outside terrace and commanded a view of the still, swampy water and the debris from sunken ships in the bay. From the entrance door to the kitchen, the floor was covered with black and white checkerboard tiles—often attributed to Dr. Urbino's ruling passion, though such a design was a weakness common to the Catalonian craftsmen who built the district for the *nouveaux riches* at the beginning of the century. The large drawing room had a very high ceiling, as did the rest of the house, and six full-length windows facing the street, and it was separated from the dining room by an enormous and elaborate glass door decorated in bronze with branching



vines and bunches of grapes and maidens being seduced by the pipes of fauns in a grove. The furnishings in the reception rooms, including the pendulum clock that stood like a living sentinel in the drawing room, were all original English pieces from the late nineteenth century, and the lamps that hung from the walls were all teardrop crystal, and there were Sèvres vases and bowls everywhere and little alabaster statues of pagan idols. But that European coherence vanished in the rest of the house, where wicker armchairs were jumbled together with Viennese rockers and leather footstools made by local craftsmen. Splendid hammocks from San Jacinto, with multicolored fringe along the sides and the owner's name embroidered in Gothic letters with silk thread, hung in the bedrooms, supplementing the beds. Next to the dining room, the space that had originally been designed for gala suppers was used as a small music room for intimate concerts when famous performers came to the city. To enhance the silence, the tiles had been covered with Turkish rugs purchased at the Exposition Universelle in Paris; a recent-model gramophone stood next to a stand that held records arranged with care, and in a corner, draped with a Manila shawl, was a concert piano, which Dr. Urbino had not played for many years. Throughout the house one could detect the good sense and care of a woman whose feet were planted firmly on the ground.

But no other room displayed the meticulous solemnity of the library, the sanctuary of Dr. Urbino. There, all around his father's walnut desk and the tufted leather easy chairs, he had lined the walls, and even the windows, with shelves behind glass doors, and had arranged in an almost demented order three thousand volumes bound in identical calfskin with his initials in gold on the spines. Unlike the other rooms, which were at the mercy of noise and foul winds from the port, the library always enjoyed the tranquillity and fragrance of an abbey. Born and raised in the Caribbean superstition hat one opened doors and windows to summon a coolness that in fact did not exist, Dr. Urbino and his wife at first elt their hearts oppressed by enclosure. But in the end they were convinced of the merits of the Roman stratagem against heat, which consists in closing houses during the lethargy of August days in order to keep out the burning air from the street and then opening them up completely to the night breezes. And from that time on theirs was the coolest house under the furious La Manga sun, and it was a delight to take a siesta in the darkened bedrooms and to sit on the portico in the afternoon and watch the heavy, ash-gray freighters from New Orleans pass by, and at dusk to see the wooden paddles of the riverboats, with their shining lights, purifying the stagnant garbage heap of the bay with the wake of their music. It was also the best-protected house from December through March, when the northern winds tore away roofs and spent the night circling the house like hungry wolves looking for a crack where they could slip in. No one ever thought that a marriage rooted in such foundations could have any reason not to be happy.

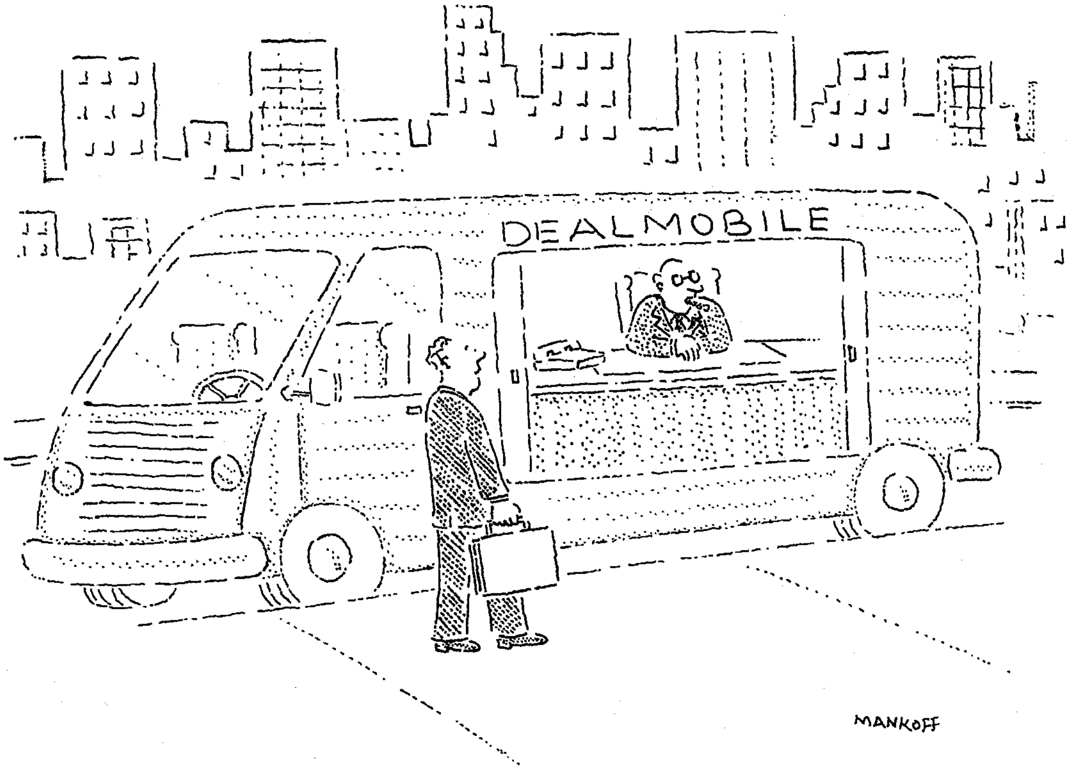
In any case, when he returned home that morning before ten o'clock, Dr. Urbino was shaken by the two visits that not only had obliged him to miss Pentecost Mass but also threatened to change him at an age when everything had seemed complete. He wanted a short siesta until it was time for Dr. Lácides Olivella's gala luncheon, but he found the servants in an uproar, trying to catch the parrot, who had flown to the highest branches of the mango tree when they took him from his cage to clip his wings. He was a deplumed, maniacal parrot who did not speak when asked to but only when it was least expected, and then with a clarity and rationality uncommon among human beings. He had been tutored by Dr. Urbino himself, which afforded him privileges that no one else in the family ever had, not even the children when they were young.

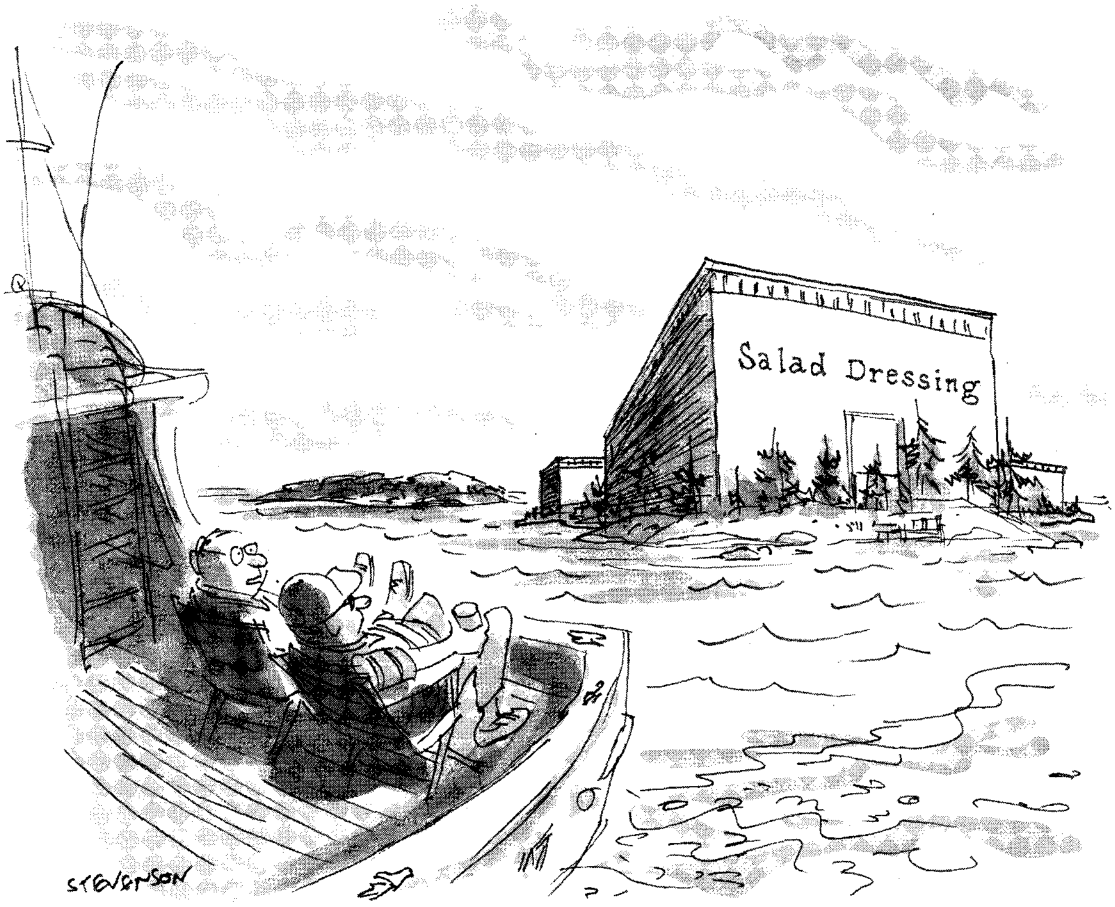
The parrot had lived in the house for over twenty years, and no one knew how many years he had been alive before then. Every afternoon after his siesta, Dr. Urbino sat with him on the terrace in the patio, the coolest spot in the house, and he had summoned the most disciplined reserves of his passion for pedagogy until the parrot learned to speak French like an academician. Then, just for love of the labor, he taught him the Latin Mass and selected passages from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and he tried, without success, to inculcate in him a working notion of the four arithmetic functions. On one of his last trips to Europe he brought back the first phonograph with a trumpet speaker, along with many of the latest popular records as well as those by his favorite classical composers. Day after day, over and over again for several months, he played the songs of Yvette Guilbert and Aristide Bruant, who had charmed France during the last century, until the parrot learned them by heart. He sang them in a woman's voice if they were Guilbert's, in a tenor voice if they were Bruant's, and ended with impudent laughter that was a masterly imitation of the servant girls when they heard him singing in French. The fame of the parrot's accomplishments was so widespread that on occasion distinguished visitors who had travelled from the interior on the riverboats would ask permission to see him, and once some of the many English tourists who in those days sailed the banana boats from New Orleans would have bought him at any price. But the day of his greatest glory was when the President of the Republic, Don Marco Fidel Suárez, with his entourage of cabinet ministers, visited the house in order to confirm the truth of the parrot's reputation. They arrived at about three o'clock in the afternoon, suffocating in the top hats and frock coats they had worn during three days of official visits under the burning August sky, and they had to leave as curious as when they arrived, because for two desperate hours the parrot refused to say a single syllable, despite the pleas and threats and public humiliation of Dr. Urbino, who had insisted on that foolhardy invitation despite the sage warnings of his wife.

That the parrot could maintain his privileges after that historic act of defiance was the ultimate proof of his sacred rights. No other animal was permitted in the house, with the exception of the land turtle, who had reappeared in the kitchen after three or four years when everyone thought he was lost forever. He, however, was considered not a living being but, rather, a mineral good-luck charm whose location one could never be certain of. Dr. Urbino was reluctant to confess his hatred of animals, and disguised it with all kinds of scientific inventions and philosophical pretexts, which convinced many, but not his wife. He said that people who loved animals to excess were capable of the worst cruelties toward human beings. He said that dogs were not loyal but servile, that cats were opportunists and traitors, that peacocks were heralds of death, that macaws were simply decorative annoyances, that rabbits fomented greed, that monkeys carried the fever of lust, and that roosters were damned because they had been complicit in the three denials of Christ.

On the other hand, Fermina Daza, his wife, who at that time was seventy-two years old and had already lost the doe's gait of her younger days, was an irrational idolater of tropical flowers and domestic animals, and early in her marriage she had taken advantage of the novelty of love to keep many more animals in the house than good sense would allow. The first were three Dalmatians, named after Roman emperors, who fought for the favors of a female who did honor to her name, Messalina, for it took her longer to give birth to nine pups than to conceive another ten. Then there were Abyssinian cats with the profiles of eagles and the manners of pharaohs, cross-eyed Siamese and palace Persians with orange eyes, who walked through the rooms like shadowy phantoms and shattered the night with their howling witches' sabbaths of love. For several years an Amazonian monkey, chained by the waist to the mango tree in the patio, elicited a certain compassion, because he had the sorrowful face of Archbishop Obdulio y Rey, the same candid eyes, the same eloquent hands; Fermina Daza got rid of him, not because of that, however, but because he had the bad habit of pleasuring himself in front of the ladies.

There were all kinds of Guatemalan birds in cages along the passageways, and premonitory curlews; and swamp herons with long yellow legs; and a young stag who came in through the windows to eat the anthurium in the flowerpots. Shortly before the last civil war, when there was talk for the first time of a possible visit by the Pope, the household imported a bird of paradise from Guatemala. It took longer to arrive than it did to return to its homeland after it was learned that the announcement of the pontifical visit had been a lie spread by the government to alarm the conspiratorial Liberals. Another time, on one of the smugglers' ships from Curaçao they bought a wicker cage with six perfumed crows identical to the ones Fermina Daza had kept as a girl in her father's house. But no one could bear the continual flapping of their wings, which filled the house with the reek of funeral wreaths. An anaconda was also brought in, four metres long, whose insomniac hunter's sighs disturbed the darkness in the bedrooms, although it accomplished what was wanted, which was to frighten with its mortal breath the bats and salamanders and countless





"Now, which one of the Thousand Islands is this?"

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species of harmful insects that invaded the house during the rainy months. Dr. Juvenal Urbino, so occupied at that time with his professional obligations and so absorbed in his civic and cultural enterprises, was content to assume that in the midst of so many abominable creatures his wife was not only the most beautiful woman in the Caribbean but also the happiest. One rainy afternoon, at the end of an exhausting day, he encountered a disaster in the house that brought him to his senses. Out of the drawing room, and for as far as the eye could see, a stream of dead animals floated in a marsh of blood. The servant girls had climbed on the chairs, not knowing what to do, and had not yet recovered from the panic of the slaughter. One of the German mastiffs, maddened by a sudden attack of rabies, had torn to pieces every animal of any kind that crossed his path, until the gardener from the house next door found the courage to face him and hack him to pieces with his machete. No one knew how many creatures he had bitten or contaminated with his green slaverings, and so Dr. Urbino ordered the survivors killed and their bodies burned in an isolated field, and he requested the services of Misericordia Hospital for a thorough disinfecting of the house. The only animal to escape, because nobody remembered him, was the giant lucky-charm tortoise.

Fermina Daza admitted for the first time that her husband was right in a domestic matter, and for a long while afterward she was careful to say no more about animals. She consoled herself with color illustrations from a natural history by Linnaeus which she framed and hung on the drawing-room walls, and perhaps she would have eventually lost all hope of ever seeing an animal in the house again if it had not been for the thieves who early one morning forced a bathroom window and made off with the silver service that had been in the family for five generations. Dr. Urbino put double padlocks on the window frames, secured the doors on the inside with iron crossbars, put his most valuable possessions in a strongbox, and belatedly acquired the wartime habit of sleeping with a revolver under his pillow. But he opposed the purchase of a fierce dog, vaccinated or unvaccinated, running loose or chained up, even if thieves were to steal everything he owned. "Nothing that does not speak will come into this house," he said.

He said it to put an end to the specious arguments of his wife, who was once again determined to buy a dog, and he never imagined that his hasty generalization was to cost him his life. Fermina Daza, whose straightforward character had become more subtle with the years, seized on her husband's casual words, and months after the robbery she returned to the ships from Curacao and bought a royal Paramaribo parrot who knew only the blasphemies of sailors but said them in a voice so human that he was well worth the extravagant price of twelve centavos.

He was a fine parrot, lighter than he seemed, with a yellow head and a black tongue, which distinguished him from mangrove parrots, who could not be trained to speak even with turpentine suppositories. Dr. Urbino, who was a good loser, bowed to the ingenuity of his wife, and was even surprised at how amused he was by the advances the parrot made when he was excited by the servant girls. On rainy afternoons, his tongue loosened by the pleasure of having his feathers drenched, he uttered phrases from another time, which he could not have learned in the house and which led one to think that he was much older than he appeared. The Doctor's final reservations collapsed one night when thieves tried to get in again, through a skylight in the attic, and the parrot frightened them with a mastiff's barking that could not have been more realistic if it had been real, and with shouts of "Stop thief stop thief stop

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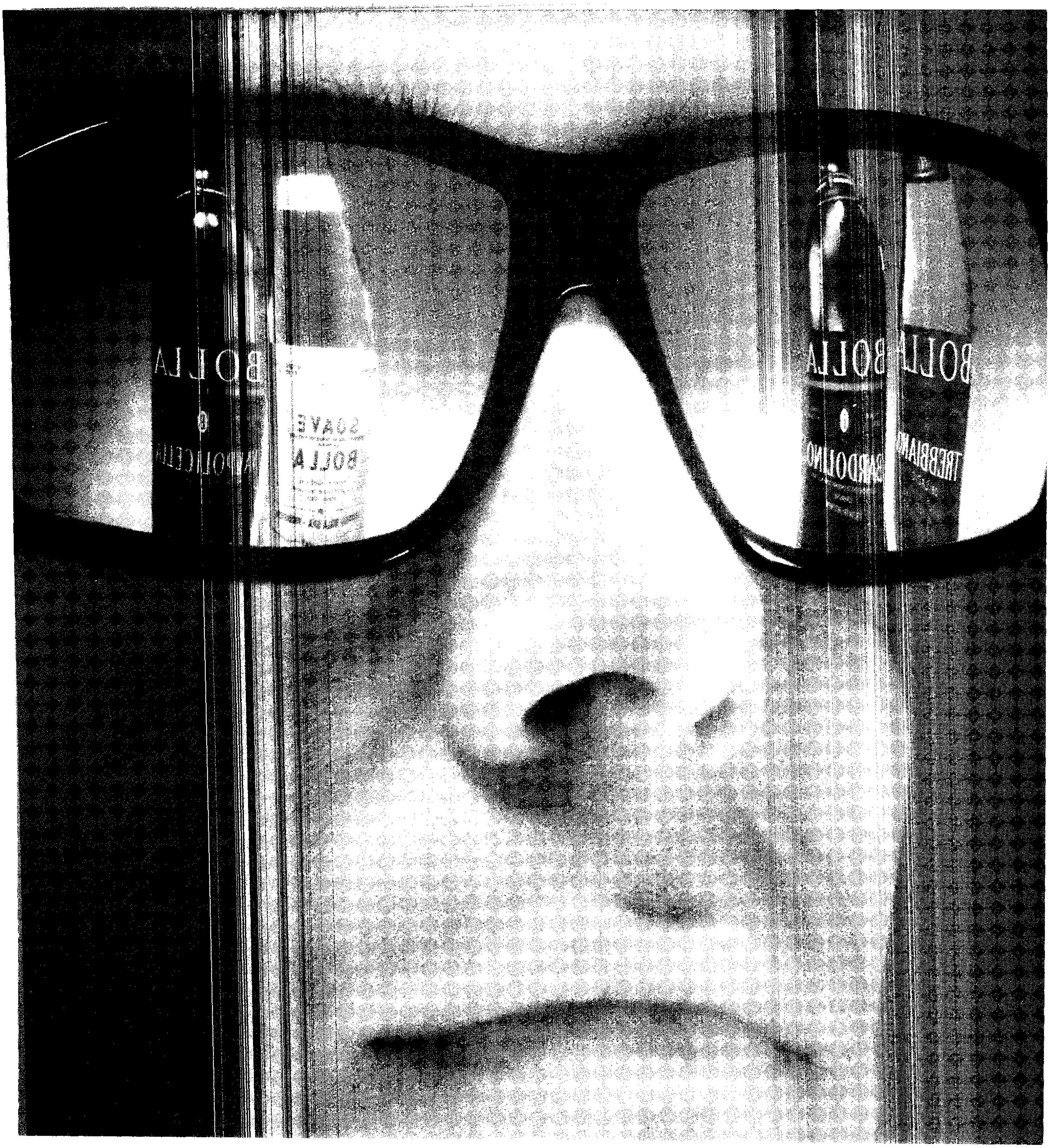
thief." It was then that Dr. Urbino took charge of the parrot and ordered the construction of a perch under the mango tree with a container for water, another for ripe bananas, and a trapeze for acrobatics. From December through March, when the nights were cold and the north winds made living outdoors unbearable, he was taken inside to sleep in the bedrooms in a cage covered by a blanket, although Dr. Urbino suspected that his chronic swollen glands might be a threat to the healthy respiration of humans. For many years they clipped his wing feathers and let him, with his hulking old horseman's gait, wander wherever he chose. But one day he began to do acrobatic tricks on the beams in the kitchen and fell into a pot of stew with a sailor's shout of "Every man for himself." The cook managed to scoop him out with the ladle, scalded and deplumed but still alive. From that time he was kept in the cage even during the daytime, in spite of the vulgar belief that caged parrots forget everything they have learned, and was let out only in the four-o'clock coolness for his classes with Dr. Urbino on the terrace in the patio. No one realized in time that his wings had grown too long, and they were about to clip them that morning when he escaped to the top of the mango tree.

And for three hours they had not been able to catch him. The servant girls, with the help of other maids in the neighborhood, had used all kinds of tricks to lure him down, but he insisted on staying where he was, laughing madly as he shouted, "Long live the Liberal Party, long live the Liberal Party, damn it," a reckless cry that had cost many a carefree drunk his life. Dr. Urbino could barely see him among the leaves, and he tried to cajole him in Spanish and French and even in Latin, and the parrot responded in the same languages and with the same emphasis and timbre in his voice, but he did not move from his treetop. Convinced that no one was going to make him move voluntarily, Dr. Urbino sent for the Fire Department, his most recent civic interest. "Tell them it's for me," he said. And he went to his bedroom to dress for the gala luncheon. The truth was that at that moment, devastated by the letter from Jeremiah de Saint-Amour, he did not really care about the fate of the parrot.

FERMINA DAZA had put on a loose-fitting silk dress belted at the hip, a necklace of real pearls arranged in six long, uneven loops, and high-heeled satin shoes that she wore only on very solemn occasions, for by now she was too old for such abuses. Her stylish attire did not seem appropriate for a venerable grandmother, but it suited her figure—long-boned and still slender and erect, her resilient hands without a single age spot, her steel-blue hair bobbed on a slant at her cheek. Her clear, almond eyes and her inborn haughtiness were all that was left to her from her wedding portrait, but what she had been deprived of by age she more than made up for in character and diligence. She felt very well: the time of iron corsets, bound waists, and bustles that exaggerated buttocks was receding into the past. Liberated bodies, breathing freely, showed themselves for what they were, even at the age of seventy-two.

Dr. Urbino found her sitting at her dressing table under the slow blades of the electric fan, putting on her bell-shaped hat decorated with felt violets. The bedroom was large and bright, with an English bed protected by mosquito netting embroidered in pink, and with two windows open to the trees in the patio, where one could hear the clamor of cicadas, giddy with premonitions of rain. Ever since returning from their honeymoon, Fermina Daza had chosen her husband's clothes according to the weather and the occasion, and laid them out for him on a chair the night before so they would be ready for him when he came out of the bathroom. She could not remember when she had also begun to help him dress, and finally to dress him, and she was aware that at first she had done it for love but that for the past five years or so she had been obliged to do it, because he could not dress himself. They had just celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, and as their age increased



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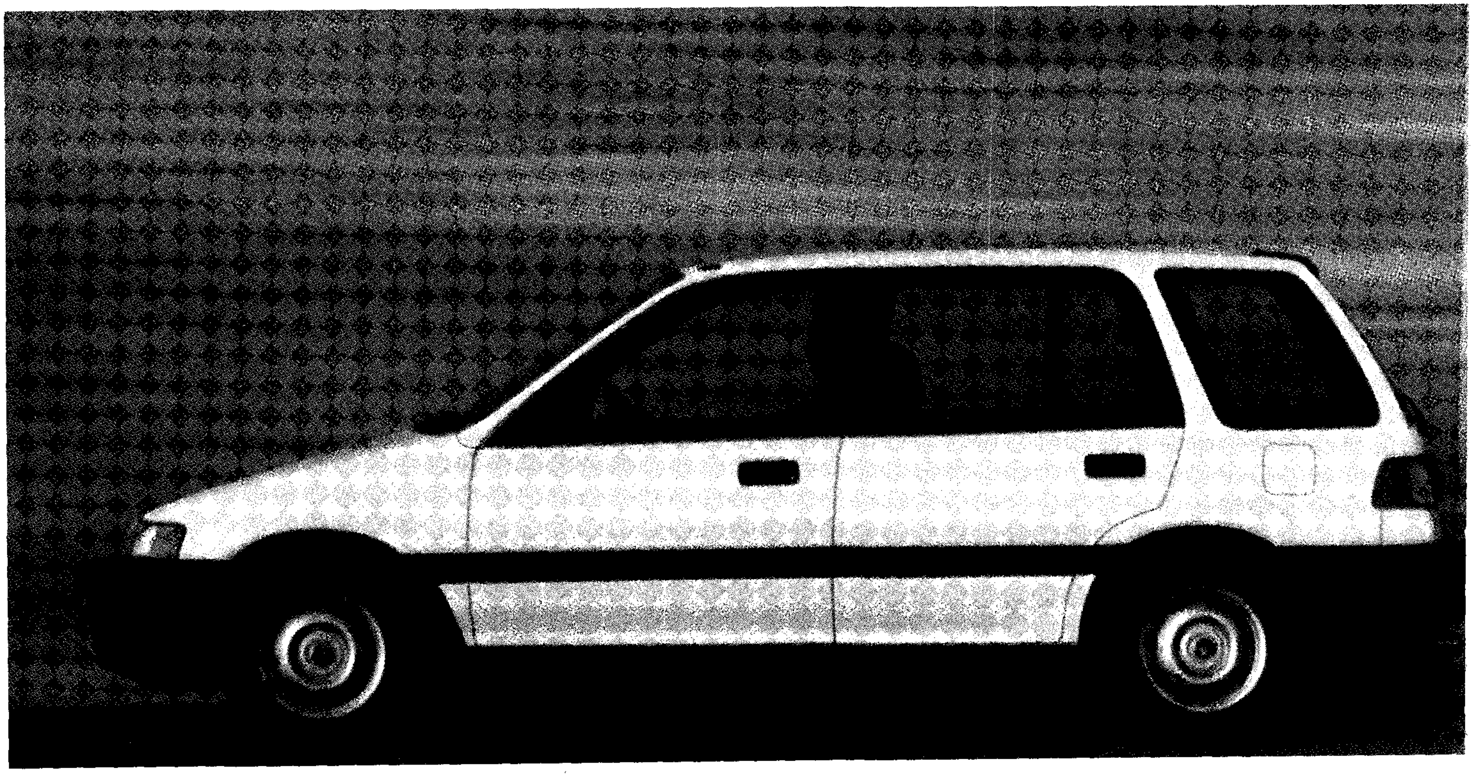
they were less and less capable of living for even an instant without the other, or without thinking about the other. Neither could have said whether their mutual dependence was based on love or on convenience, but they had never asked the question with their hands on their hearts, because each had always preferred not to know the answer. Little by little she had been discovering the uncertainty of her husband's step, his mood changes, the gaps in his memory, his recent habit of sobbing while he slept, but she identified these not as the unequivocal signs of final decay but, rather, as a happy return to childhood. That was why she treated him not like a difficult old man but like a senile baby, and the deception was providential for the two of them, because it put them beyond the reach of pity.

Life would have been quite another matter for them both if they had learned in time that it was easier to avoid great matrimonial catastrophes than trivial everyday miseries. But if they had learned anything together it was that wisdom comes to us when it can no longer do any good. For years Fermina Daza had endured her husband's jubilant dawns with a bitter heart. She clung to the last threads of sleep in order to avoid facing the fatality of another morning full of sinister premonitions, while he awoke with the innocence of a newborn: each new day was one more day he had won. She heard him awake with the roosters, and his first sign of life was a cough without rhyme or reason, unless it was intended to awaken her, too. She heard him grumble, just to annoy her, while he felt around for the slippers that were supposed to be next to the bed. She heard him make his way to the bathroom, groping in the dark. After he had been an hour in his study, when she had fallen asleep again, she heard him come back to dress, still without turning on the light. Once, during a party game, he had been asked how he defined himself, and he said: "I am a man who dresses in the dark." She heard him, knowing full well that not one of those noises was indispensable, and that he made them on purpose, although he pretended not to, just the way she pretended not to be awake. His motives were clear: he never needed her awake and lucid as much as he did during those fumbling moments.

There was no sleeper more elegant than she, with her curved body posed for a dance and her hand across her forehead, but there was also no one more ferocious when anyone disturbed the sensuality of her thinking that she was still asleep when she no longer was. Dr. Urbino knew that she was waiting for his slightest sound, that she would even be grateful for it, just so she could blame someone for waking her at five o'clock in the morning, so that, on the few occasions when he had to feel around in the dark because he could not find his slippers in their customary place, she could suddenly say in a sleepy voice: "You left them in the bathroom last night." Then, right after that, her voice fully awake with rage, she would curse: "The worst misfortune in this house is that nobody lets you sleep." Then she would roll over in bed, and turn on the light without the least mercy on herself, content with her first victory of the day. The truth was they both played a game: mythical and perverse but, for all that, comforting—it was one of the many dangerous pleasures of domestic love.

Yet one of those trivial games almost ended the first thirty years of their life together. It began with rou-



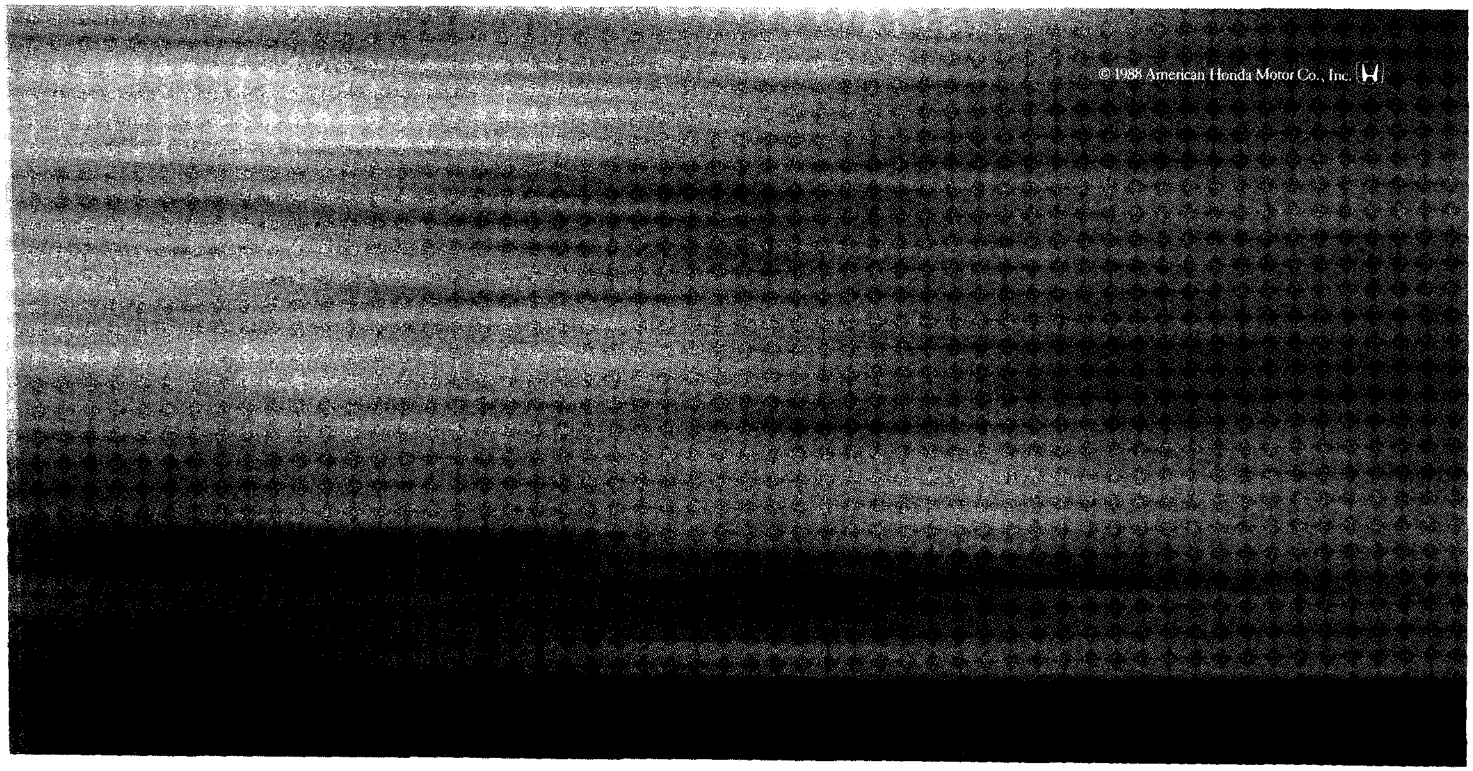
tine simplicity. Dr. Juvenal Urbino had returned to the bedroom, in the days when he still bathed without help, and begun to dress without turning on the light. As usual, she was in her warm, fetal state, her eyes closed, her breathing shallow, her arm above her head. But she was only half asleep, as usual, and he knew it. After a prolonged sound of starched linen in the darkness, Dr. Urbino said to himself: "I've been bathing for almost a week without any soap."

Then, fully awake, she remembered, and tossed and turned in fury with the world, because in fact she had forgotten to replace the soap in the bathroom. She had noticed its absence three days earlier, when she was already under the shower, and she had planned to replace it afterward, but then she forgot until the next day, and on the third day the same thing happened again. The truth was that not a week had gone by, as he said to make her feel more guilty, but three unpardonable days, and her anger at being found out in a mistake maddened her. As always, she defended herself by attacking. "Well, I've bathed every day," she shouted, beside herself with rage, "and there's always been soap."

Although he knew her battle tactics by heart, this time he could not abide them. On some professional pretext or other he went to live in the internes' quarters at Misericordia Hospital, returning home only to change his clothes before making his evening house calls. She headed for the kitchen when she heard him come in, pretending that she had something to do, and stayed there until she heard his carriage in the street. For the next three months, each time they tried to resolve the conflict they only inflamed their feelings even more. He was not ready to come back as long as she refused to admit there had been no soap in the bathroom, and she was not prepared to have him back until he recognized that he had consciously lied to torment her.

The incident, of course, gave them the opportunity to evoke many other trivial quarrels from many other dim and turbulent dawns. Resentments stirred up other resentments, reopened old scars, turned them into fresh wounds, and both were dismayed at the desolating proof that in so many years of conjugal battling they had done little more than nurture their rancor. At last he proposed that they should both submit to an open confession, with the Archbishop himself if necessary, so that God could decide once and for all whether or not there had been soap in the soap dish in the bathroom. Then, despite all her self-control, she lost her temper with a historic cry: "To hell with the Archbishop!"

The impropriety shook the very foundations of the city, gave rise to slanders that were not easy to disprove, and was preserved in popular tradition as if it were a line from an operetta: "To hell with the Archbishop!" Realizing she had gone too far, she anticipated her husband's predictable response and threatened to move back to her father's old house, which still belonged to her although it had been rented out for public offices, and live there by herself. And it was not an idle threat: she really did want to leave and did not care about the scandal, and her husband realized this in time. He did not have the courage to defy his own prejudices and he capitulated. Not in the sense that he admitted there had been soap in the bathroom but insofar as he continued to live in the same house with her, although they slept in separate bedrooms and he did not say a word to her. They ate in silence, spar-



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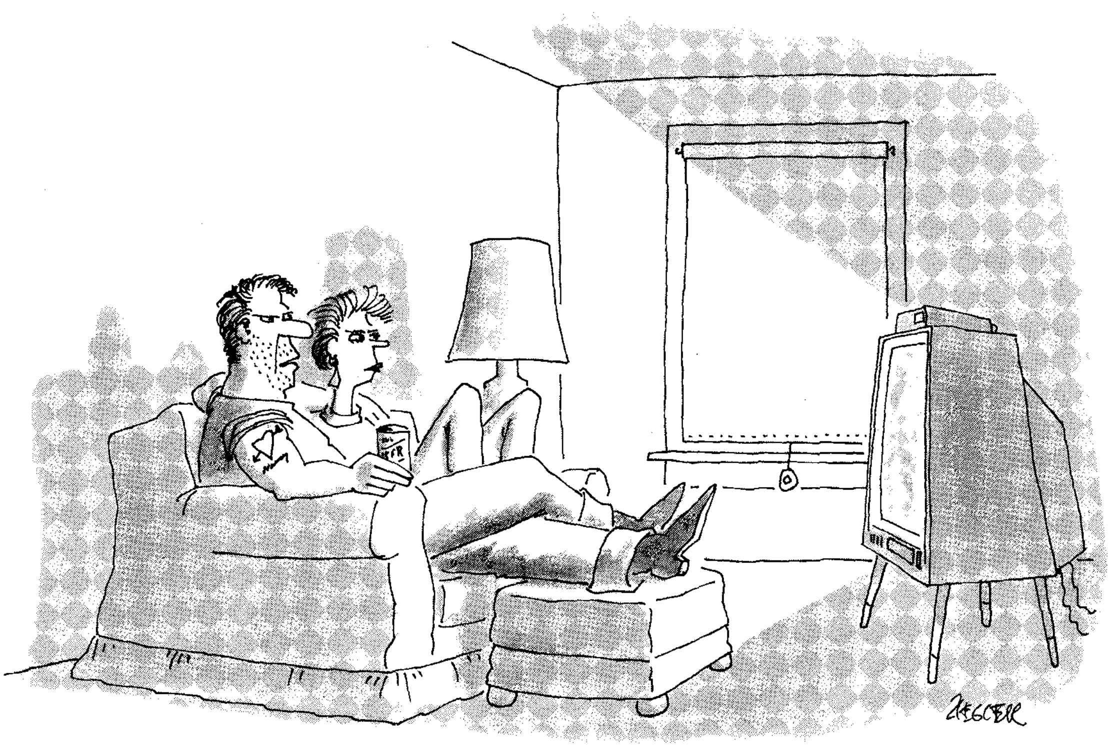
ring across the table with so much skill that they sent each other messages through the children without their ever realizing that their parents were not speaking.

Since the study had no bathroom, this arrangement solved the problem of noise in the morning, because he came in to bathe after preparing his class and made a sincere effort not to awaken his wife. They would often arrive at the bathroom at the same time, and they took turns brushing their teeth before going to sleep. After four months had gone by, he lay down, as he often did, on their double bed one night to read until she came out of the bathroom, and he fell asleep. She lay down beside him in a rather careless way so that he would wake up and leave. And in fact he did stir, but instead of getting up he turned out the light and settled himself on the pillow. She shook him by the shoulder to remind him that he was supposed to go to the study, but it felt so comfortable to be back in his great-grandparents' feather bed that he preferred to capitulate. "Let me stay here," he said. "There was soap."

When they recalled this episode, now that they had rounded the corner of old age, neither could believe the astonishing truth that this had been the most serious argument in fifty years of living together, and the only one that had made them both want to abandon their responsibilities and begin a new life. Even when they were old and placid they were careful about bringing it up, for the barely healed wounds could begin to bleed again as if they had been inflicted only yesterday.

He was the first man that Fermina Daza had heard urinate. She heard him on their wedding night, while she lay prostrate with seasickness, in the stateroom on the ship that was carrying them to France, and the sound of his stallion's stream seemed so potent, so replete with authority, that it increased her terror of the devastation to come. That memory often returned to her as the years weakened the stream, for she never could resign herself to his wetting the rim of the toilet bowl each time he used it. Dr. Urbino tried to convince her with arguments that were readily understandable to anyone who wished to understand them that the mishap was not repeated every day through carelessness on his part, as she insisted, but because of organic reasons. When he was a young man his stream was so defined and so direct that at school he won contests for marksmanship in filling bottles, but with the ravages of age it was not only decreasing, it was also becoming oblique and scattered, and had at last turned into a fantastic fountain impossible to control despite his many efforts. He would say: "The toilet must have been invented by someone who knew nothing about men." He contributed to domestic peace with a quotidian act that was more humiliating than humble: he wiped the rim of the bowl with toilet paper each time he used it. She knew, but never said anything as long as the ammoniac fumes in the bathroom were not too strong, and then she proclaimed, as if she had uncovered a crime: "This stinks like a rabbit hutch." On the eve of old age this physical difficulty inspired Dr. Urbino with the final solution: he urinated sitting down, as she did, which kept the bowl clean and him in a state of grace.

By this time he could do very little for himself, and the possibility of a fatal slip in the tub put him on his guard against the shower. The house was modern and did not have the pewter tub with lion's-paw feet common in the mansions of the old city. He had ordered it removed for hygienic reasons: the bathtub was another piece of abominable junk invented by Europeans, who only bathed on the last Friday of the month, and then in the same water made filthy by the very dirt they tried to remove from their bodies. So they had an outsized washtub made of solid lignum vitae in which Fermina Daza bathed her husband just as if he were a newborn child. Waters boiled with mallow leaves and orange skins were added to the bath, which lasted over an hour, and the effect on him was so sedative that he sometimes fell asleep in the perfumed infusion. After bathing him, Fermina Daza helped him to dress; she sprinkled talcum powder between his legs, she smoothed cocoa butter on his rashes, she helped him put on his undershorts with as much love as if they had been a diaper, and continued dressing him, item by



"Bill Cosby seems like one hell of a nice guy. He's really asking for it."

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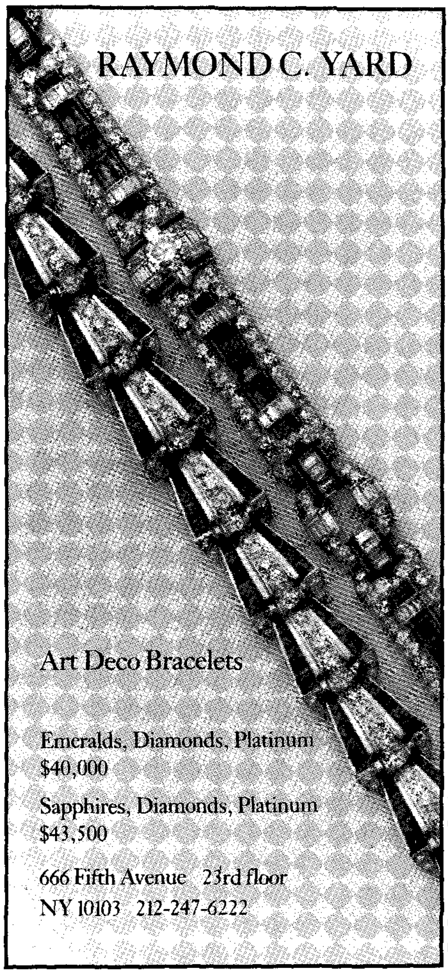

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item, from his socks to the knot in his tie with the topaz pin. Their conjugal dawns grew calm, because he had returned to the childhood his children had taken away from him. And she, in turn, at last accepted the domestic schedule, because the years were passing for her, too; she slept less and less, and by the time she was seventy she was awake before her husband.

On Pentecost Sunday, when he lifted the blanket to look at Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's body, Dr. Urbino experienced the revelation of something that had been denied him until then in his most lucid voyages as a physician and a believer. After so many years of familiarity with death, after battling it for so long, after so much turning inside out and upside down, it was as if he had dared to look death in the face for the first time and it had looked back at him. What he felt was not the fear of death. No, that fear had been inside him for many years—it had lived with him, it had been another shadow cast over his own shadow ever since the night he awoke, shaken by a bad dream, and realized that death was not only a permanent probability, as he had always believed, but an immediate reality. What he had seen that day, however, was the physical presence of something that until that moment had been only an imagined certainty. He was very glad that the instrument used by Divine Providence for that overwhelming revelation had been Jeremiah de Saint-Amour, whom he had always considered a saint unaware of his own state of grace. But when the letter revealed Jeremiah de Saint-Amour's identity, his sinister past, his inconceivable powers of deception, he felt that something definitive and irrevocable had occurred in his life.

Fermina Daza did not allow him to infect her with his sombre mood. He tried, of course, while she helped him put his legs into his trousers and worked the long row of buttons on his shirt. But he failed, because Fermina Daza was not easy to impress, least of all by the death of a man she did not care for. All she knew about Jeremiah de Saint-Amour was that he was a cripple whom she had never seen, that he had escaped the firing squad during one of many insurrections on one of many islands in the Antilles, that he had gone to work as a photographer of children out of necessity and had become the most successful one in the province, and that he had won a game of chess from someone she remembered as Torremolinos but who in reality was named Capablanca.

"He was nothing more than a fugitive from Cayenne, condemned to life imprisonment for an atrocious crime," said Dr. Urbino. "Imagine, he had even eaten human flesh."

He handed her the letter, whose secrets he wanted to carry with him to the grave, but she put the folded sheets in her dressing table without reading them and locked the drawer with a key. She was accustomed to her husband's unfathomable capacity for astonishment, his exaggerated opinions, which became more incomprehensible as the years went by, his narrowness of mind, which was out of tune with his public image. But this time he had outdone himself. She had supposed that her husband esteemed Jeremiah de Saint-Amour not for what he had once been but for what he began to be after he arrived here with only his exile's rucksack, and she could not understand why he was so distressed by the disclosure of his true identity at this late date. She did not comprehend why he thought it an abomination that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had had a woman in secret, since that was an atavistic custom of a certain kind of man, himself included—yes, even he in a moment of ingratitude—and, besides, it seemed to her a heartbreaking proof of love that the woman had helped him carry out his decision to die. She said: "If you also decided to do that for reasons as serious as his, my duty would be to do what she did." Once again Dr. Urbino found himself face to face with the simple incomprehension that had exasperated him for half a century.

"You don't understand anything," he said. "What infuriates me is not what he was or what he did but the deception he practiced on all of us for so many years." His eyes began to fill with easy tears, but she pretended not to see.

"He did the right thing," she replied. "If he had told the truth, not you or that poor woman or anybody in this town would have loved him as much as they did."

She threaded his watch chain through the buttonhole in his vest. She put the finishing touches to the knot in his tie and pinned on his topaz tiepin. Then she dried his eyes and wiped his teary beard with a handkerchief sprinkled with Florida water and put that in his breast pocket with the corners spread open like a magnolia. Eleven strokes of the pendulum clock sounded in the depths of the house.

"Hurry," she said, taking him by the arm. "We'll be late."

Aminta Dechamps, Dr. Lácides Olivella's wife, and her seven daughters, each as diligent as the next, had arranged every detail so that the silver-anniversary luncheon would be the social event of the year. The family home, in the very center of the historic district, was the old Mint, denatured by a Florentine architect who came through here like an ill wind blowing renovation and converted many seventeenth-century relics into Venetian basilicas. It had six bedrooms and two large, well-ventilated dining and reception rooms, but that was not enough space for the guests from the city, not to mention the very select few from out of town. The patio was like an abbey cloister, with a stone fountain murmuring in the center and pots of heliotrope that perfumed the house at dusk, but the space among the arcades was inadequate for so many grand family names. So it was decided to hold the luncheon in their country house, which was ten minutes away by automobile along the King's Highway and had over an acre of patio, and enormous Indian laurels, and local water lilies in a gently flowing river. The men from Don Sancho's Inn, under the supervision of Señora de Olivella, hung colored canvas canopies in the sunny areas and raised a platform under the laurels with tables for a hundred and twenty-two guests, with linen tablecloths on each of them and bouquets of the day's fresh roses for the table of honor. They also built a wooden dais for a woodwind band, whose program was limited to contradances and national waltzes, and for a string quartet from the School of Fine Arts, which was Señora Olivella's surprise for her husband's venerable teacher, who would preside over the luncheon. Although the date did not correspond exactly with the anniversary of his graduation, they chose Pentecost Sunday in order to magnify the significance of the celebration.

The preparations had begun three months earlier, for fear that something indispensable would be left undone for lack of time. They brought in live chickens from Ciénaga de Oro, famous all along the coast not only because of their size and flavor but because in colonial times they had scratched for food in alluvial deposits, and little nuggets of pure gold were found in their gizzards. Señora de Olivella herself, accompanied by some of her daughters and her domestic staff, boarded the luxury ocean liners and selected the best from everywhere to honor her husband's achievements. She had anticipated everything except that the celebration would take place on a Sunday in June in a year when the rains were late. She realized the danger that very morning when she went to High Mass and was horrified by the humidity and saw that the sky was heavy and low and that one could not make out the ocean's horizon. Despite these ominous signs, the director of the astronomical observatory, whom she met at Mass, reminded her that in all the troubled history of the city, even during the cruellest winters, it had never rained on Pentecost. Still, when the clocks struck twelve and many of the guests were already having an apéritif outdoors, a single crash of thunder made the earth tremble, a turbulent wind from the sea knocked over the tables and blew down the canopies, and the sky collapsed in a catastrophic downpour.

In the chaos of the storm, Dr. Juvenal Urbino, along with other late guests he had met on the road, had great difficulty reaching the house, and he wanted to jump, like them, from stone to stone across the muddy patio, but at last he had to accept the humiliation of Don Sancho's men carrying him under a yellow canvas canopy. The servants did the best they could to set up the tables again inside the house—even in the bedrooms—but the guests made no effort to disguise their surly, shipwrecked mood. It was as hot as a ship's boiler room, for the windows had to be closed to keep out the wind-driven rain. In the patio, each place at the tables had been marked with a card bearing the name of the guest, one side of the table reserved for men and the other for women, according to custom. But inside the house the place cards were in confusion and people sat where they could in an obligatory promiscuity that defied our social superstitions. In the midst of the cataclysm Aminta de Olivella seemed to be everywhere at once, her hair soaking wet and her splendid dress spattered with mud, but bearing up under the misfortune with the invincible smile, learned from her husband, that would give no quarter to adversity. With the help of her daughters, who were cut from the same cloth, she did everything possible to keep the places at the

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table of honor in order, with Dr. Juvenal Urbino in the center and Archbishop Obdulio y Rey on his right. Fermina Daza sat next to her husband, as she always did, for fear he would fall asleep during the meal or spill soup on his lapel. Across from him sat Dr. Lácides Olivella, a well-preserved man of about fifty, with an effeminate air, whose festive spirit seemed in no way related to his accurate diagnoses. The rest of the table was occupied by provincial and municipal officials and last year's beauty queen, whom the governor escorted to the seat next to him. Although it was not customary for invitations to request special attire, least of all for a luncheon in the country, the women wore evening gowns and precious jewels and most of the men were dressed in dinner jackets with black ties; some even wore frock coats. Only the most sophisticated, Dr. Urbino among them, wore their ordinary clothes. At each place was a menu printed in French, with golden vignettes.

Señora de Olivella, horror-struck by the devastating heat, went through the house pleading with the men to take off their jackets during the luncheon, but no one dared to be the first. The Archbishop commented to Dr. Urbino that in a sense this was a historic luncheon: there, together for the first time at the same table, their wounds healed and their anger dissipated, sat the two opposing sides in the civil wars that had bloodied the country ever since Independence. This thought accorded with the enthusiasm of the Liberals, especially the younger ones, who had succeeded in electing a President from their party after forty-five years of Conservative hegemony. Dr. Urbino did not agree: in his opinion a Liberal President was exactly the same as a Conservative President only not as well dressed. But he did not want to contradict the Archbishop, although he would have liked to point out to him that each guest was at that luncheon not because of what he thought but because of the merits of his lineage, which was something that had always stood over and above the hazards of politics and the horrors of war. From this point of view, in fact, not a single person was missing.

The downpour ended as suddenly as it had begun, and the sun began to shine in a cloudless sky, but the storm was so violent that several trees had been uprooted and the overflowing stream had turned the patio into a swamp. The greatest disaster had occurred in the kitchen. Wood fires had been built outdoors on bricks behind the house, and the cooks barely had time to rescue their pots from the rain. They lost precious time reorganizing the flooded kitchen and improvising new fires in the back gallery. But by one o'clock the crisis had been resolved and only the dessert was missing: the Sisters of St. Claire were in charge of that and they had promised to send it before eleven. It was feared that the ditch along the King's Highway had flooded, as it did even in less severe winters, and in that case it would be at least two hours before the dessert would arrive. As soon as the weather cleared, they opened the windows, and the house was cooled by air that had been purified by the sulfurous storm. Then the band was told to play its program of waltzes on the terrace of the portico, but that only heightened the confusion, because everyone had to shout to be heard over the banging of copper pots inside the house. Tired of waiting, smiling even on the verge of tears, Aminta de Olivella ordered luncheon to be served.

The School of Fine Arts group led off the concert amid a formal silence that sufficed for the opening bars of Mozart's "La Chasse." Despite the voices that grew louder and more confused and the intrusions of Don Sancho's black servants, who could barely squeeze past the tables with their steaming serving dishes, Dr. Urbino managed to keep a channel open to the music until the program was over. His powers of concentration had decreased so much with the passing years that he had to write down each chess move in order to remember what he had planned. Yet he could still engage in serious conversation and follow a concert at the same time, although he never reached the masterly extremes of a German orchestra conductor, a great friend of his during his time in Austria, who read the score of "Don Giovanni" while listening to "Tannhäuser."

He thought that the second piece, Schubert's "Death and the Maiden," was played with easy dramatism. While he strained to listen through the clatter of covered dishes, he stared at a blushing boy who nodded to him in greeting. He had seen him somewhere, no doubt about that, but he could not remember where. This often happened to him, above all with people's names, even those he knew well, or with a melody from other times, and it caused him such dreadful anguish that one night he would have preferred to die rather than endure it until dawn. He was on the verge of reaching that state now when a charitable flash illuminated his memory: the boy had been one of his students last year. He was surprised to see him there, in the kingdom of the elect, but Dr. Olivella reminded him that he was the son of the Minister of Health and had come to prepare a thesis in forensic medicine. Dr. Juvenal Urbino greeted him with a joyful wave of his hand, and the young doctor stood up and responded with a bow. But not then, not ever, did he realize that this was the interne who had been with him that morning in the house of Jeremiah de Saint-Amour.

Comforted by yet another victory over old age, he gave himself up to the diaphanous and fluid lyricism of the final piece of the program, which he could not identify. Later the young cellist, who had just returned from France, told him it was a quartet for strings by Gabriel Fauré, whom Dr. Urbino had not even heard of, although he was always very alert to the latest trends in Europe. Fermina Daza, who was keeping an eye on him, as she always did—most of all when she saw him becoming introspective in public—stopped eating and put her earthly hand on his. She said: "Don't think about it anymore." Dr. Urbino smiled at her from the far shore of ecstasy, and it was then that he began to think again about what she had feared. He remembered Jeremiah de Saint-Amour, on view at that hour in his coffin, in his bogus military uniform with his fake decorations, under the accusing eyes of the children in the portraits. He turned to the Archbishop to tell him about the suicide, but the Archbishop had already heard the news. There had been a good deal of talk after High Mass, and he had even received a request from General Jerónimo Argote, on behalf of the Caribbean refugees, that Jeremiah de Saint-Amour be buried in consecrated ground. He said: "The request itself, it seemed to me, showed a lack of respect." Then, in a more human tone, he asked if anyone knew the reason for the suicide. Dr. Urbino answered: "Gerontophobia"—the proper word, although he thought he had just invented it. Dr. Olivella, attentive to

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HENRY THREADGILL

HOME: Brooklyn, NY

AGE: 43.

PROFESSION: Composer; multi-instrumentalist; inventor of the hubkaphone; leader, Henry Threadgill Sextett.

HOBBY: Swimming. "It's the best way I know of keeping my head above water."

LAST BOOK READ: *Silence*, John Cage.

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Two new records: *Easily Slip Into Another World*, with the Sextett; *Air Show No. 1*, with Air, his other group.

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "It was either make money or make music which for me wasn't even a choice."

QUOTE: "Tradition is a background of ingredients; in itself it's nothing. If you can't make something out of it, the world can do without it."

PROFILE: Intuitive, strong and as sharp an observer of his fellow man as his music would lead you to think.

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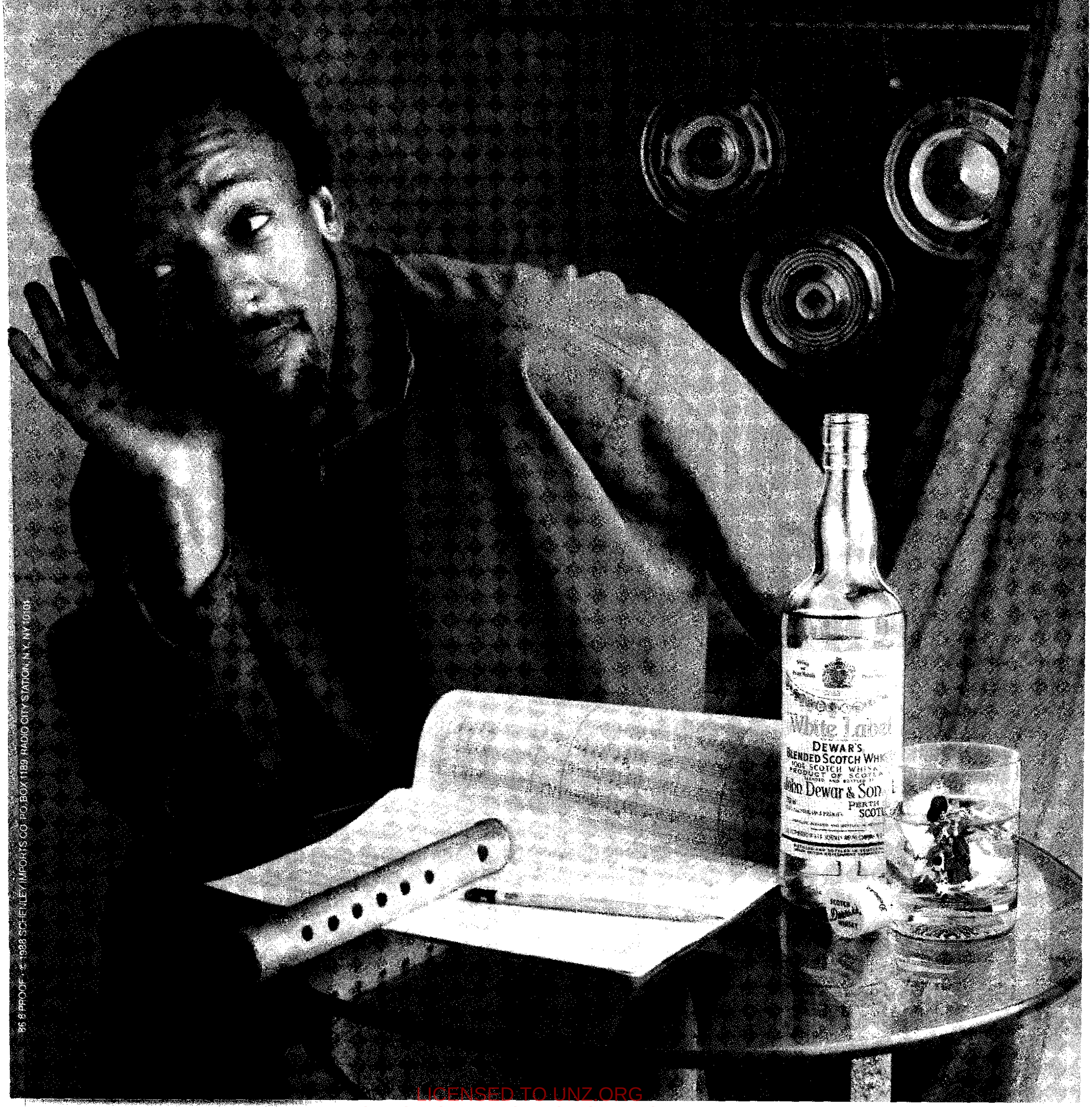
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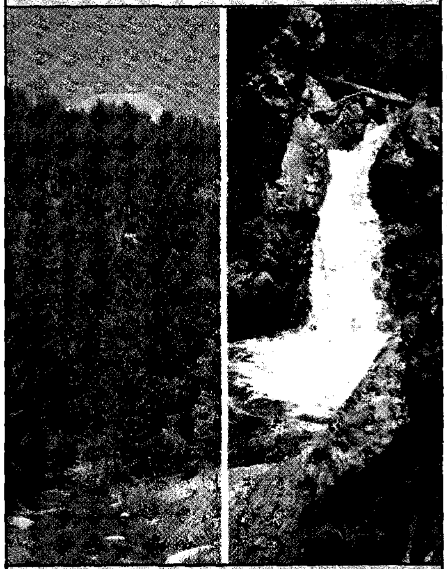

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the guests sitting closest to him, stopped listening to them for a moment to take part in his teacher's conversation. He said: "It is a pity to still find a suicide that is not for love." Dr. Urbino was not surprised to recognize his own thoughts in those of his favorite disciple.

"And worse yet," he said, "with gold cyanide." When he said that, he once again felt compassion prevailing over the bitterness of the letter, for which he thanked not his wife but, rather, a miracle of the music. Then he spoke to the Archbishop of the lay saint he had known in their long twilights of chess; he spoke of the dedication of his art to the happiness of children, his rare erudition in all things of this world, his Spartan habits, and Dr. Urbino was surprised by the purity of soul with which Jeremiah de Saint-Amour had separated himself once and for all from his past. Then he spoke to the Mayor about the advantages of purchasing the files of photographic plates in order to preserve the images of a generation who might never again be happy outside their portraits and in whose hands lay the future of the city. The Archbishop was scandalized that a militant and educated Catholic would dare to think that a suicide was saintly, but he agreed with the plan to create an archive of the negatives. The Mayor wanted to know from whom they were to be purchased. Dr. Urbino's tongue burned with the live coal of the secret. "I will take care of it." And he felt redeemed by his own loyalty to the woman he had repudiated five hours earlier. Fermina Daza noticed it and in a low voice made him promise that he would attend the funeral. Relieved, he said that of course he would, that went without saying.

The speeches were brief and simple. The woodwind band began a popular tune that had not been announced on the program, and the guests strolled along the terraces waiting for the men from Don Sancho's Inn to finish drying the patio in case anyone felt inclined to dance. The only guests who stayed in the drawing room were those at the table of honor, who were celebrating the fact that Dr. Urbino had drunk half a glass of brandy in one swallow in a final toast. No one recalled that he had already done the same thing with a glass of *grand cru* wine as accompaniment to a very special dish, but his heart had demanded it of him that afternoon, and his self-indulgence was well repaid: once again, after so many long years, he felt like singing. And he would have, no doubt, at the urging of the young cellist, who offered to accompany him, if one of those new automobiles had not suddenly driven across the mudhole of the patio, splashing the musicians and rousing the ducks in the barnyards with the quacking of its horn. It stopped in front of the portico, and Dr. Marco Aurelio Urbino Daza and his wife emerged, laughing for all they were worth and carrying in each hand a tray covered with lace cloths. Other trays just like them were on the jump seats and even on the floor next to the chauffeur. It was the belated dessert. When the applause and the shouted cordial jokes had ended, Dr. Urbino Daza explained in all seriousness that, before the storm broke, the Sisters of St. Claire had asked him to please take the dessert but he had left the King's Highway because someone said that his parents' house was on fire. Dr. Juvenal Urbino became upset before his son could finish the story, but his wife reminded him in time that he himself had called for the firemen to rescue the parrot. Aminta de Olivella was radiant as she decided to serve the dessert on the terraces even though they had already had their coffee. But Dr. Juvenal Urbino and his wife left without tasting it, for there was barely enough time for him to have his sacred siesta before the funeral.

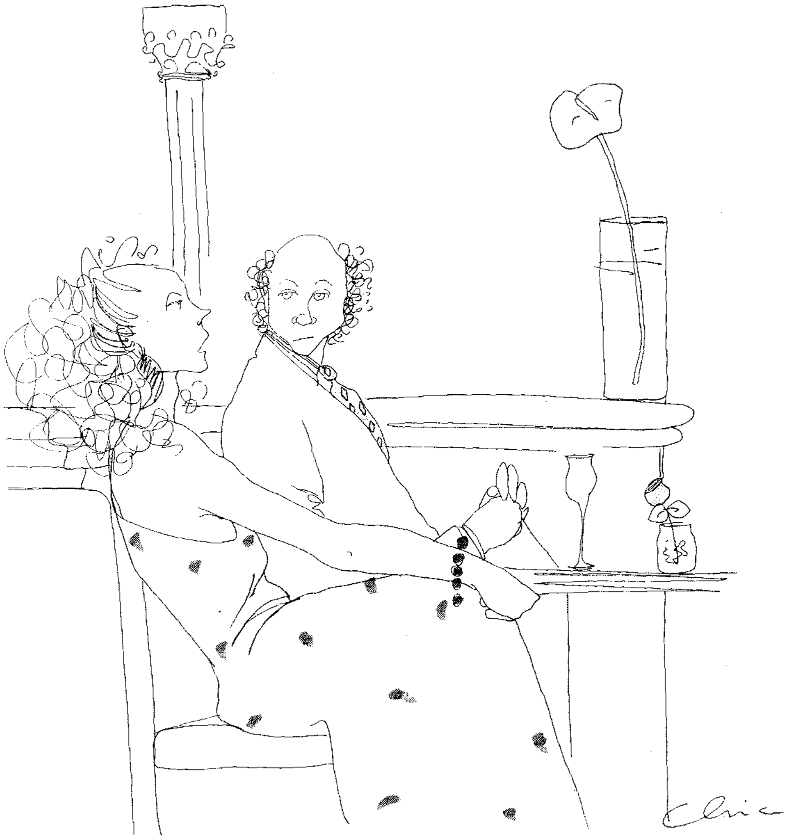
And he did have it, although his sleep was brief and restless, because when he returned home he discovered that the firemen had caused almost as much damage as a fire. In their efforts to frighten the parrot they had stripped a tree with the pressure hoses, and a jet of water misdirected through the windows of the master bedroom had caused irreparable damage to the furniture and to the portraits of unknown forebears hanging on the walls. Thinking that there really was a fire, the neighbors had hurried over when they heard the bell on the fire truck, and if the disturbance was no worse it was because the schools were closed on Sunday. When they realized they could not reach the parrot even with their extension ladders, the firemen began to chop at the branche with machetes, and only the opportun arrival of Dr. Urbino Daza prevente them from mutilating the tree all th way to the trunk. They left, saying they would return after five o'clock i they received permission to prune, an on their way out they muddied th interior terrace and the drawing room and ripped Fermina Daza's favorite Turkish rug. Needless disasters, all of them, because the general impression was that the parrot had taken advantage of the chaos to escape through neighboring patios. And in fact Dr. Urbino looked for him in the foliage, but there was no response in any language, not even to whistles and songs, so he gave him up for lost and went to sleep when it was almost three o'clock. But first he enjoyed the immediate pleasure of smelling a secret garden in his urine, which had been purified by lukewarm asparagus.

HE was awakened by sadness. Not the sadness he had felt that morning when he stood before the corpse of his friend but the invisible cloud that would saturate his soul after his siesta and that he interpreted as divine notification that he was living his final afternoons. Until the age of fifty he had not been conscious of the size and weight and condition of his organs. Little by little, as he lay with his eyes closed after his daily siesta, he had begun to feel them, one by one, inside his body—feel the shape of his insomniac heart, his mysterious liver, his hermetic pancreas—and he had slowly discovered that even the oldest people were younger than he was and that he had become the only survivor of his generation's legendary group portraits. When he became aware of his first bouts of forgetfulness he had recourse to a tactic he had heard about from one of his teachers at the medical school: "The man who has no memory makes one out of paper." But this was a short-lived illusion, for he had reached the stage where he would forget what the written reminders in his pockets meant, search the entire house for the eyeglasses he was wearing, turn the key again after locking the doors, and lose the sense of what he was reading because he had forgotten the premise of the argument or the relationships among the characters. But what disturbed him most was his lack of confidence in his own power of reason: little by little, as in an ineluctable shipwreck, he felt himself losing his good judgment.

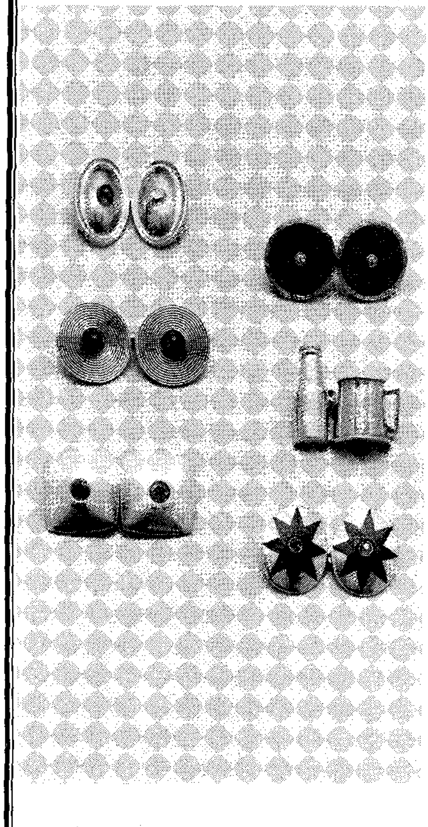
With no scientific basis except his own experience, Dr. Juvenal Urbino knew that most fatal diseases had their own specific odor, but that none was as specific as old age. He detected it in the cadavers slit open from head to toe on the dissecting table, he even recognized it in the patients who hid their age with greatest success, he smelled it in the perspiration on his own clothing and in the unguarded breathing of his sleeping wife. If he had not been what he was—in essence, an old-style Christian—perhaps he would have agreed with Jeremiah de Saint-Amour that old age was an indecent state that had to be ended before it was too late. The only consolation, even for someone like him, who had been a good man in bed, was sexual peace: the slow, merciful extinction of his venereal appetite. At eighty-one years of age, he had enough lucidity to realize that he was attached to this world by a few slender threads that could break painlessly with a simple change of position while he slept, and if he did all he could to keep those threads intact it was because of his terror of not finding God in the darkness of death.

Fermina Daza had been busy straightening the bedroom that had been destroyed by the firemen, and a little before four she sent for her husband's daily glass of lemonade with chipped ice and reminded him that he should dress for the funeral. That afternoon Dr. Urbino had two books by his hand: "Man, the Unknown," by Alexis Carrel, and "The Story of San Michele," by Axel Munthe; the pages of the second book were still uncut, and he asked Digna Pardo, the cook, to bring him the marble paper cutter he had left in the bedroom. But when it was brought to him he was already reading "Man, the Unknown" at the place he had marked with an envelope: there were only a few pages left till the end. He read slowly, making his way through the meanderings of a slight headache that he attributed to the half glass of brandy in the final toast. When he paused in his reading he sipped the lemonade or took his time chewing on a piece of ice. He was wearing his socks, and his shirt without its starched collar; his elastic suspenders with the green stripes hung down from his waist. The mere idea of having to change for the funeral irritated him. Soon he stopped reading, placed one book on top of the other, and began to rock very slowly in the wicker rocking chair, contemplating with regret the banana plants in the mire of the patio, the stripped mango, the flying ants that came after the rain, the ephemeral splendor of another afternoon that would never return. He had forgotten that he ever owned a parrot from Paramaribo whom he loved as if he were a human being, when suddenly he heard him say: "Royal parrot." His voice sounded near, almost next to him, and then he saw him in the lowest branch of the mango tree. "You scoundrel!" he shouted.

The parrot answered in an identical



"Twenty-seven West Sixty-eighth Street. I like it. It says you're here."



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voice: "You're even more of a scoundrel, Doctor!"

He continued to talk to the parrot, keeping him in view while he put on his boots with great care, so as not to frighten him, and pulled his suspenders up over his arms and went down to the patio, which was still full of mud, testing the ground with his stick so that he would not trip on the three terrace steps. The parrot did not move, and perched so close to the ground that Dr. Urbino held out his walking stick, so that he could sit on the silver handle, as was his custom, but the parrot sidestepped it and jumped to the next branch, a little higher up but easier to reach, since the house ladder had been leaning against it even before the arrival of the firemen. Dr. Urbino calculated the height and thought that if he climbed two rungs he would be able to catch him. He stepped onto the first, singing a disarming, friendly song to distract the attention of the churlish bird, who repeated the words without the music and sidled still farther out on the branch. He climbed to the second rung without difficulty, holding on to the ladder with both hands, and the parrot began to repeat the entire song without moving from the spot. He climbed to the third rung and then the fourth, for he had miscalculated the height of the branch, and then he grasped the ladder with his left hand and tried to seize the parrot with his right. Digna Pardo, the old servant, who was coming to remind him that he was going to be late for the funeral, saw the back of a man standing on the ladder, and she would not have believed who it was had it not been for the green stripes on the elastic suspenders.

"*Santísimo Sacramento!*" she shrieked. "You'll kill yourself!"

Dr. Urbino caught the parrot around the neck with a triumphant sigh: "*Ça y est.*" But he released him immediately, because the ladder slipped from under his feet, and for an instant he was suspended in air, and then he realized that he had died without Communion, without time to repent of anything or to say goodbye to anyone, at seven minutes after four, on Pentecost Sunday.

Fermina Daza was in the kitchen tasting the soup for supper when she heard Digna Pardo's horrified shriek and the shouting of the servants and then of the entire neighborhood. She dropped the tasting spoon and tried her best to run, despite the invincible weight of her age, screaming like a madwoman without knowing yet what had happened under the mango leaves, and her heart jumped inside her ribs when she saw her man lying on his back in the mud, dead to this life but still resisting death's final blow for one last minute so that she would have time to come to him. He recognized her despite the uproar, through his tears of unrepeatable sorrow at dying without her, and he looked at her for the last and final time with eyes more luminous, more grief-stricken, more grateful than she had ever seen them in half a century of a shared life, and he managed to say to her with his last breath: "Only God knows how much I loved you."

DR. URBINO was always acutely aware of the cracks in his public image, and no one was as conscious as he of being the last to bear a family name on its way to extinction. His children were two undistinguished ends of a line. After fifty years his son, Marco Aurelio, a doctor like himself and like all the family's firstborn sons in every generation, had done nothing worthy of note—he had not even produced a child. Dr. Urbino's only daughter, Ofelia, was married to a solid bank employee from New Orleans, and had reached the climacteric with three daughters and no son. But although stemming the flow of his blood into the tide of history caused him pain, what worried Dr. Urbino most about dying was the solitary life Fermina Daza would lead without him.

In any event, the tragedy not only caused an uproar among his own household but spread to the common people as well. They thronged the streets in the hope of seeing something, even if it was only the brilliance of the legend. Three days of mourning were proclaimed, flags were flown at half-staff in public buildings, and the bells in all the churches tolled without pause until the crypt in the family mausoleum was sealed. A group from the School of Fine Arts made a death mask that was used as the mold for a life-size bust, but the project was cancelled because no one thought the faithful rendering of his final terror was decent. A renowned artist who happened to be stopping here on his way to Europe painted, with pathos-laden realism, a gigantic canvas in which Dr. Urbino was depicted on the ladder at the fatal moment when he stretched out his hand to capture the parrot. The only element that contradicted the raw truth of the story was that in the painting he was wearing not the collarless shirt and the suspenders with green stripes but, rather, a bowler hat and black frock coat copied from a rotogravure made during the years of the cholera epidemic. So that everyone would have the chance to see it, the painting was exhibited for a few months after the tragedy in the vast gallery of the Golden Wire, a shop that sold imported merchandise, and the entire city filed by. Then it was displayed on the walls of all the public and private institutions that felt obliged to pay tribute to the memory of their illustrious patron, and at last it was hung, after a second funeral, in the School of Fine Arts, where it was pulled down many years later by art students, who burned it in the Plaza of the University as a symbol of an aesthetic and a time they despised.

From her first moment as a widow, one could see that Fermina Daza was not as helpless as her husband had feared. She was adamant in her determination not to allow the body to be used for any cause, and she remained so even after the honorific telegram from the President of the Republic ordered it to lie in state for public viewing in the Assembly Chamber of the Provincial Government. With the same serenity she opposed a vigil in the cathedral, which the Archbishop himself had requested, and she agreed to its lying there only during the funeral Mass. Even after the mediation of her son, who was dumbfounded by so many different requests, Fermina Daza was firm in her rustic notion that the dead belong only to the family, and that the vigil should be kept at home, with mountain coffee and fritters and people free to weep for him in any way they chose. There would be no traditional nine-night wake. The doors were closed after the funeral, and did not open again except for visits from intimate friends.

The house was under the rule of death. Every object of value had been locked away with care for safekeeping, and on the bare walls there were only the outlines of the pictures that had been taken down. Chairs from the house, and those lent by the neighbors, were lined up against the walls from the drawing room to the bedrooms, and the empty spaces seemed immense and the voices had a ghostly resonance, because the large pieces of furniture had been moved to one side, except for the concert piano, which

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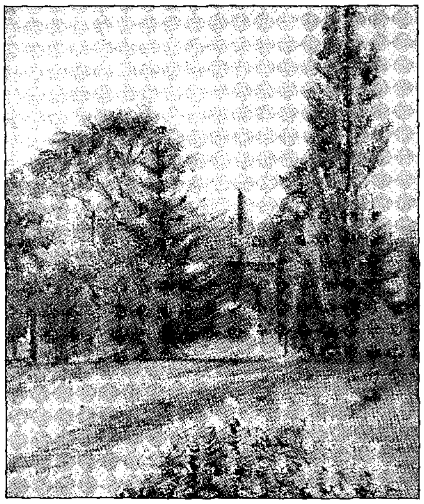

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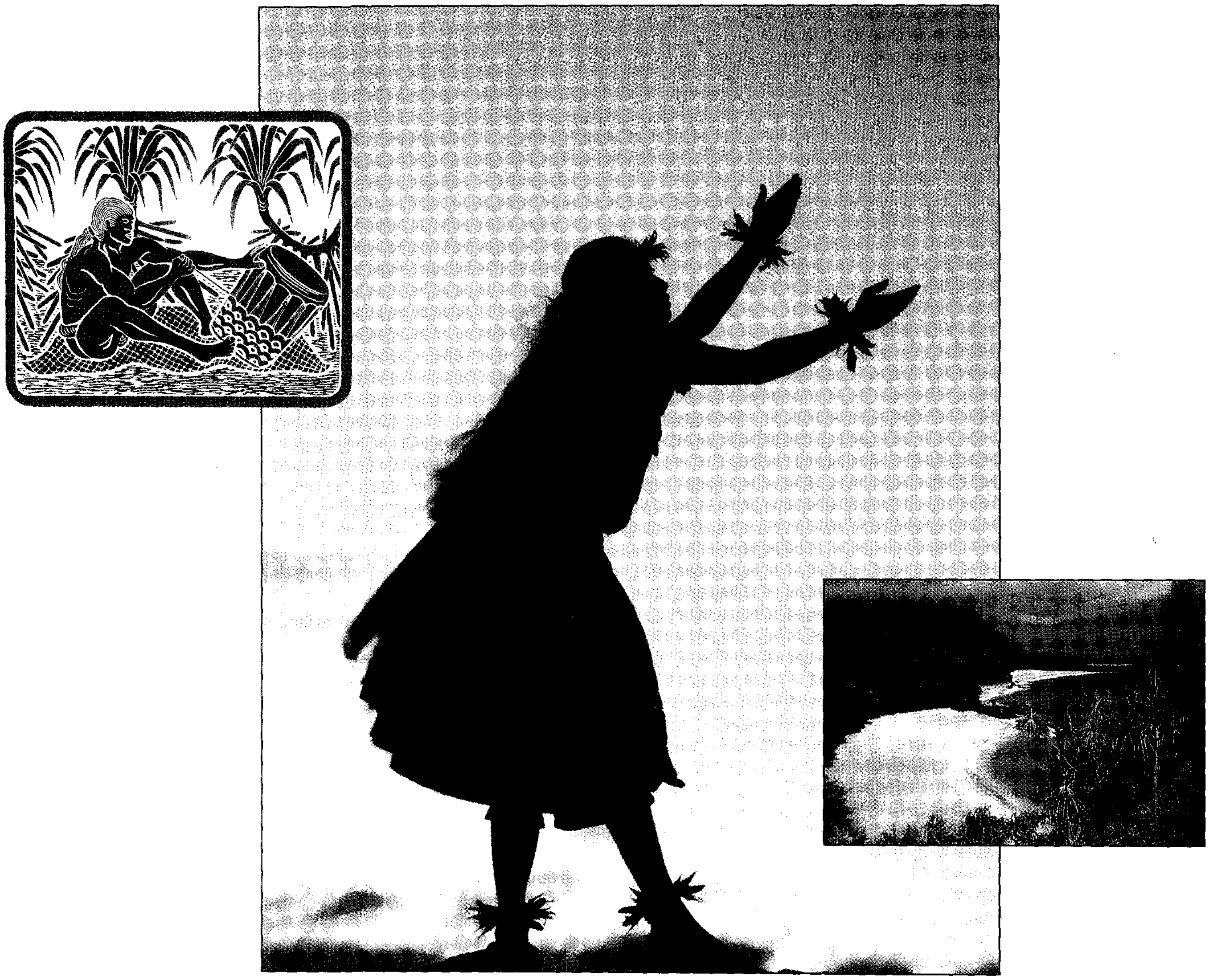
stood in its corner under a white sheet. In the middle of the library, on his father's desk, what had once been Juvenal Urbino de la Calle was laid out with no coffin, with his final terror petrified on his face, and with the cape and military sword of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. At his side, in complete mourning, tremulous, hardly moving, but very much in control of herself, Fermina Daza received condolences with no great display of feeling until eleven the following morning, when she bade farewell to her husband from the portico, waving goodbye with a handkerchief.

It had not been easy for her to regain her self-control after she heard Digna Pardo's shriek in the patio and found the old man of her life dying in the mud. Her first reaction was one of hope, because his eyes were open and shining with a radiant light she had never seen there before. She prayed to God to give him at least a moment, so that he would not go without knowing how much she had loved him despite all their doubts, and she felt an irresistible longing to begin life with him over again, so that they could say what they had left unsaid and do right everything that they had done badly in the past. But she had to give in to the intransigence of death. Her grief exploded into a blind rage against the world, even against herself, and that is what filled her with the control and the courage to face her solitude alone. From that time on she had no peace, but she was careful about any gesture that might seem to betray her grief. The only moment of pathos, although it was involuntary, occurred at eleven o'clock Sunday night, when they brought in the coffin, still smelling of ship's wax, with its copper handles and tufted silk lining. Dr. Urbino Daza ordered it closed without delay, since the air in the house was already rarefied with the heady fragrance of so many flowers in the sweltering heat, and he thought he had seen the first purplish shadows on his father's neck. An absent-minded voice was heard in the silence: "At that age you're half decayed while you're still alive." Before they closed the coffin Fermina Daza took off her wedding ring and put it on her dead husband's finger. Then she covered his hand with hers, as she always did when she caught him digressing in public, and said to him: "We will see each other very soon."

—GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

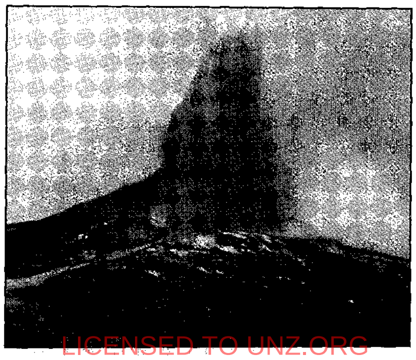
(*Translated, from the Spanish, by Edith Grossman.*)

HAWAII



PARADISE FOR ALL SEASONS

Hawaii is often depicted as America's playground, and for good reasons — the climate is pleasant; the light, luminous; the sea, refreshing; the recreation, abundant and pleasingly packaged. It is very easy to fly in for a week or two or three and surrender everything to the water and sun.



OAHU

But if Hawaii were only a vacation zone, it would not for long retain its place in our collective imagination, nor would it draw such a range of regular visitors. Often billed as the land of endless summer where the atmosphere never varies, Hawaii is in fact a land of extremes and startling contrasts. It is full of surprises. It is a botanical wonderland and it is a military arsenal. It is a golfer's mecca, and it is a geological laboratory. During its two centuries on the map of the known world, it has become a Pacific legend, with its halcyon climate, extraordinary loveliness, and a complex multicultural history.

The Bishop Museum on the island of Oahu, where a visit to Hawaii might begin, is west of downtown Honolulu on a low hill. It is named for Bernice Pauahi Bishop, great-grand-daughter of Kamehameha The Great. The last direct descendant of this warrior-king, she willed to her New York-born husband, Charles Reed Bishop, the royal family's irreplaceable collection of feathered necklaces and capes, bark-cloth treasures, ceremonial spears and calabashes, emblems of power and the implements of war. These subsequently became the core collection of the museum. During the century since it opened, the Bishop Museum has become a world center for Pacific Area studies, containing the best collection of Polynesian artifacts and relics found anywhere.

In recent years it has launched a series of public events such as The Bishop Museum Festival. Some ten thousand people turn out for this annual Sunday open-house on the spacious grounds that surround the cut-stone buildings. Special exhibits from the back rooms and research labs are prepared – Pacific insects, rare shells, historic photos. In outdoor booths, traditional arts and crafts are taught or demonstrated – lei-stringing, fishhook carving, the printing of patterns on tapa cloth, the plaiting of slender *hala* leaves.

On another hillside, a couple of miles away, the East-West Center sees Hawaii as a crucial touch-point between North America, Asia, and the South Pacific. It is an international think-tank where everything from manufacturing to body language is studied. The Center also hosts writers' conferences and summertime gatherings of Pacific Island dancers. And each fall it sponsors the Hawaii International Film Festival.

In an era when film events are proliferating almost beyond number, this one has carved out a distinctive place. It has been called "the festival with a conscience" and "the festival with a heart." For seven years it has held to a consistent theme, "When Strangers Meet." Its organizers seek out films that open windows from one culture to another, or somehow shed light on areas of cultural collision and misunderstanding. They bring together films and film people from all parts of the Asia/Pacific region, from Hong Kong to San Francisco, from Sydney to Seoul. Among last December's guests were Roland Joffe, Japanese director Nagisa Oshima, and Korea's brilliant cinematographer, Jung Il-sung.

As its reputation has grown, this festival has begun to attract, from both sides of the ocean, travellers interested in mixing stimulating film viewing with a trip to the islands. Panels and after-film discussions, usually open to the public, provide congenial settings for East-West dialogue. Most screenings are in theatres in or near the Waikiki area, and in keeping with the Center's belief that films should be available to a broad range of viewers, the screenings are free. Last December, 150 films were shown, including ten world premieres and fifteen U.S. premieres, to a total audience of sixty thousand.

Oahu's number-one tourist attraction continues to be the hulk of the U.S.S. Arizona, sunk at Pearl Harbor in 1941 and still visible just below the surface of the famed lagoon. Every hour of every day, motor launches head out to a memorial platform next to the remains. When the motors are cut and the tour guide's voice subsides, there is only the lapping of translucent water and the ghost ship to contemplate.

If you're visiting Hawaii in late fall or early winter, don't overlook the surfing contests. Oahu is still the international headquarters for this sport, hosting annual competitions for men and women, amateur and pro. The Buffalo Big Board Surfing Classic is held in late February at Makaha Beach on the leeward side. The main event is the Triple Crown of

A typical sight from the North Shore— canoeing.

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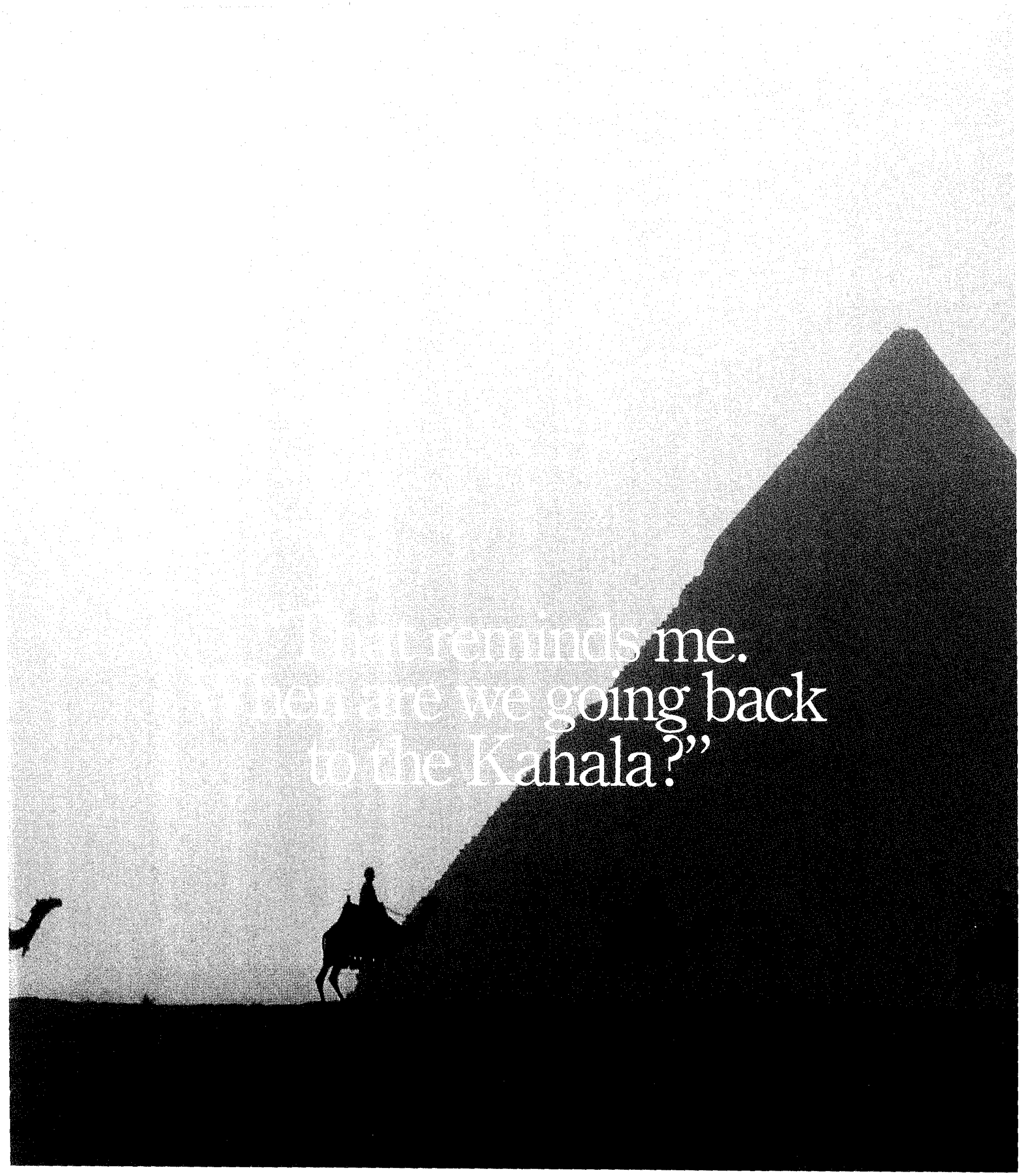

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KAUAI

Surfing, held between late November and late December depending on conditions.

And bear in mind that in Hawaii wave-riding is something more than a pleasant way to kill an afternoon. It is a sport with its own long and colorful history. When the first Europeans arrived, surfing was clearly the national pastime. Though Captain James Cook and his crew had circumnavigated the globe, they had never seen anything quite like the Hawaiian's mastery of the waves around their islands. "The boldness and address with which they performed these difficult and dangerous maneuvers," wrote Cook's lieutenant, James King, in 1779, "*was altogether astonishing and scarcely* to be believed."

By the 18th century the sport held a social role akin to baseball's in 20th-century America. The carving of boards from native woods was a high craft. (Several are on permanent display at the Bishop, some as long as 18 feet and weighing 150 pounds.) Wave-riding feats were celebrated in song and legend.

Though just about everything has changed since Cook arrived, the quality of the waves has remained constant. For the entry-level surfer there is still no better place to learn the rudiments than Waikiki, where boards can be rented by the hour or the day. Unless a very heavy *swell is running, the* waves are gently sloped. And while you're struggling to paddle and to stand, the lagoon is easy to fall into, at 75 degrees Farenheit or so all year round.

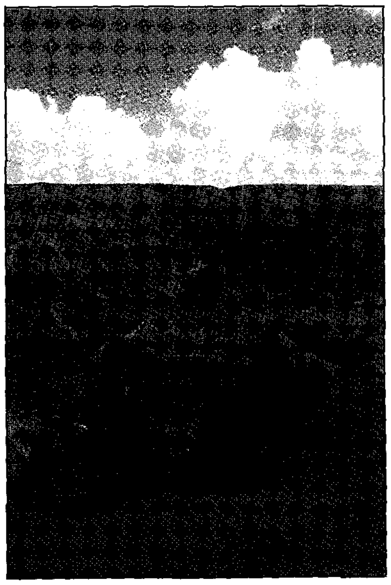
Oahu has the best surfing spots and dozens of good beaches, which is both a blessing and a hazard. It is yet another reason so many flock to this island called "The Gathering Place." That in turn *is* why a lot of visitors quickly head for the outer islands.

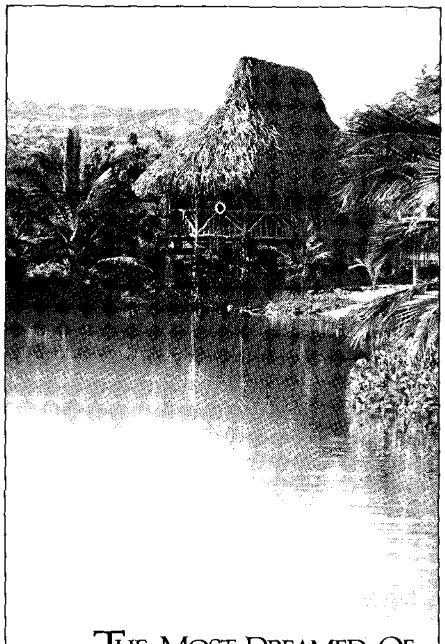
Mark Twain called Waimea Canyon the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific."

Kauai lies a hundred miles north and east. The most northerly in the chain, it is sometimes called The Separate Kingdom. It was the island that Kamehameha could never conquer, though he tried twice, agreeing in the end to negotiate a peace and thereby fulfill his dream of unifying all the islands. Residents still enjoy thinking of Kauai as a place apart. Indeed, each island, in its way, is a separate kingdom, with its own traditions, genealogies, micro-climates, and mystique. You can get some sense of these differences in the various world records each island claims to hold: Lanai has the world's largest pineapple field. Molokai has the world's highest sea cliffs, 4000 feet from surf to ridge line. Oahu has the world's largest shopping center. Maui has the world's largest dormant volcano. Hawaii, the Big Island, has the world's most active volcanic region. Kauai has the wettest spot on earth, Mount Waialeale, with an average rainfall of 480 inches per year.

Water is the key to Kauai. The Wailua River, which empties into a windward bay, is the only navigable fresh-water stream in Hawaii. On every island streams and rivers flow out of the high country, but this is the only one broad enough for ferries to cruise inland and let you feel the island, with its lush growth, rising around you. Three miles upriver these cruises end at a luxuriant grotto, a natural amphitheatre of arching ferns. The acoustics there may make your skin prickle.

One of the sought-out sites on Kauai is Lumahai Beach, a prime location for the filming of Rodgers and





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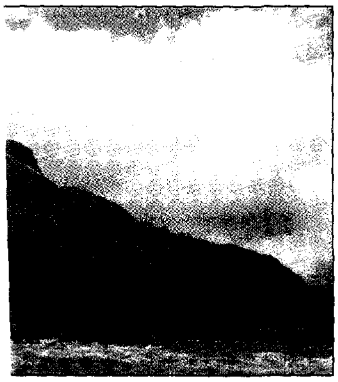
Hammerstein's "South Pacific." A beautiful spot in and of itself, Lumahai lies on the spectacular north shore just a couple of miles from the site of a much older and more indigenous musical performance. According to one tradition, Kauai is the home of the hula, and there is an ancient dance platform, cleared and restored a few years back in the spirit of the cultural renaissance that has breathed new life into Hawaii's native heritage. New generations of dancers bring offerings to the altar here, paying homage to Laka, the goddess who taught this form of dancing to the Hawaiian people. If you follow a foot trail beyond the end of the paved road you will come upon a terrace of flat stones, with a natural lava back-drop on one side, the ocean on the other. Set among high cocoa palms and hala trees, it occupies a stub of land called "Ha'ena," which means "the end," referring not to the road, but to the point, which is the most northerly in Hawaii. From here there is nothing else until you reach the Aleutians.



Trails continue past the hula platform and out toward the formidable cliffs of the Na Pali coast. Nimble hikers will tell you their lives have been altered by the harrowing eleven-mile hike which ends at Kalalau. But most visitors nowadays prefer to make the trip via Zodiac launch or helicopter, which has become a favorite way to get acquainted with Kauai. By air, you can follow the drop-off cliffs, striped with ribbon waterfalls. You can enter the throat of an empty seacoast valley, then climb toward the hard-to-reach interior, the ragged peaks, the long rain-forest jungle called The Alakai Swamp, where some of the earth's oldest plants varieties are found. With lowland quilts of sugar cane in the distance, you can follow Kauai's famous Waimea Canyon, the widest and deepest fissure in Polynesia, layered with the sandy and rocky hues you expect to find in Arizona. They say Mark Twain was the first to call it "The Grand Canyon of the Pacific."

MOLOKAI

If there is a beaten path among these islands, Molokai has never been on it. With a total population in Hawaii of 1.1 million, only 6,500 live on Molokai. It is the closest island to Oahu, but the contrast is almost impossible to grasp without visiting both. On Molokai, 20 minutes from Honolulu, there has never been a traffic light. "You go horseback riding here, you can tie up any place," one local fellow said. "Everybody knows whose horse it is, and where you gonna take 'em anyhow?"

Molokai is a hiker's island, and a hunter's island. Turkey, goat, deer, and boar run wild here. The East End of Molokai is built up with fish ponds they say go back a thousand years, for trapping and cultivating ocean fish. The largest, Keawanui, covers 54 acres and is enclosed by a 2,000-foot wall, a curving jetty of slick black lava rock.

The East End road curves around toward Halawa Valley; once there, you can see why this side of the island continues to draw adventurers. Molokai is the back country of Hawaii, and this is the back country wilderness of Molokai. Broad and fertile and untamed, the valley wedges

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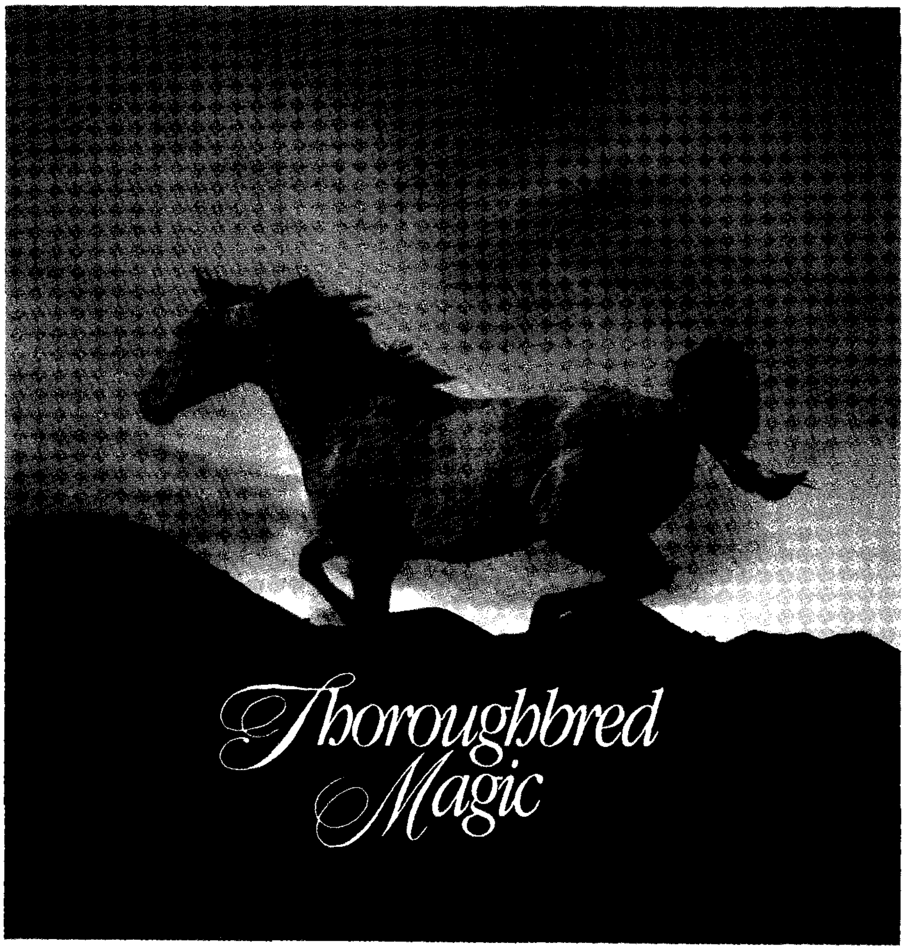

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MAUI

inland toward the 250-foot Moalua Falls, an hour's hike along a sometimes muddy trail.

Halawa Beach is the launch point for Zodiac trips, solo kayaks, and occasional wind-surfing expeditions out toward the twenty miles of headlands beyond the tiny bay. No foot trails have ever been cut across these sea-plunging cliffs. It is a coastline notched with valleys that can only be reached by water, jungle valleys where you find abandoned village sites and waterfalls such as Kihiwa, which drops 1750 feet. After Yosemite, it is the second highest falls in the United States.

The annual Molokai-Oahu Canoe Race starts here each October, at a west-end beach called Hale-o-Lono. (If you happen to be in Honolulu in October, the racers finish at Fort DeRussy Beach, near the Ala Wai Boat Harbor.) Twelve-man crews paddle six on and six off, in a grueling endurance test that is the World Series of outrigger canoe racing. The growing popularity of this sport bespeaks the renewal of pride in yet another feature of early Polynesian life, the tradition of sea-going prowess.

Geographically and politically, Molokai is linked to Maui, which lies nine miles south and east across another channel. Both islands are part of Maui County and part of a sub-cluster in the middle of this long archipelago. From a place on Maui's western shore, not far from Lahaina, you can stand and see Molokai on your right, Lanai straight ahead and almost close enough to touch, Kahoolawe off to the left, and much farther south, Hawaii. Given its location, it is no wonder that the town of Lahaina in times past was a capital of the kingdom and then a 19th century center for Hawaii's short-lived whaling industry.

Lahaina is still a sailing headquarters, with many pleasure craft anchored in its harbor. For the visitor this means a choice of numerous day trips to nearby islands, via Zodiac, luxury catamaran, or glass-

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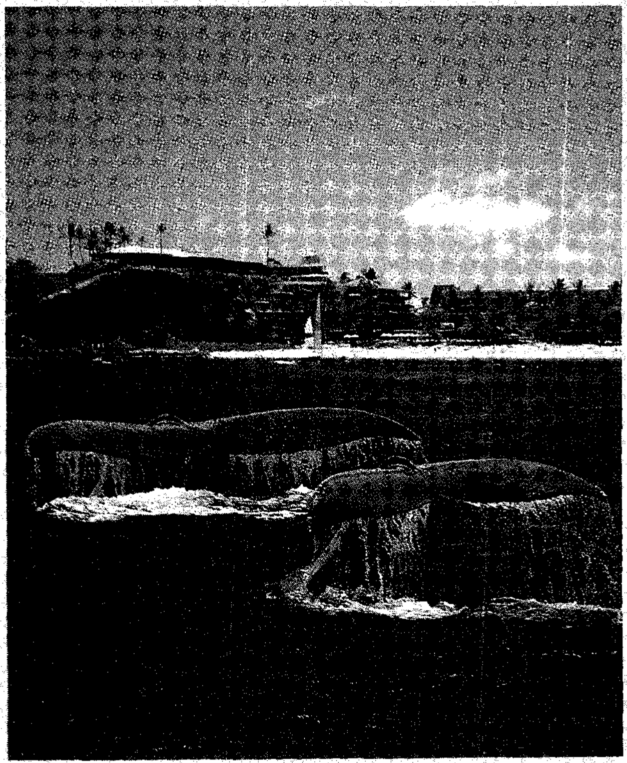

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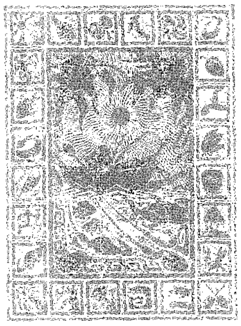
bottomed boat. Three miles offshore the volcanic shred called Molokini is a snorkeler's dream. Its crescent-shaped anchorage is a Marine Preserve where you are likely to be surrounded by schools of tame and exotic fish. There is also the rare chance to cruise out among humpback whales who still congregate in these waters. The largest are sixty feet long and can weigh fifty tons. Some five hundred will arrive in an average year, and remain from November through April, to mate, to calve, to frolic with their young in a channel the earliest sailors in these parts – the Hawaiians themselves – had named *Ke-ala-i-kahiki*, "the way to Tahiti."

This island was formed by two volcanoes, now joined by a fertile plain or "saddle." The knot of peaks that make up the West Maui Mountains is the older formation, deeply cut by streams and verdant canyons. Across the central plain stands much younger Haleakala, a massive shield cone that occupies two-thirds of the island. It last erupted in 1790, when two small fissures opened near the base of its sprawling southwestern slope. That may have been the final gasp from the vents that heaped it skyward, but no one has yet officially pronounced it dead.

Like Fuji and Shasta, Haleakala so dominates the landscape it must be contended with. For some, it calls forth reverence. Mauians will wake early and drive to its high-altitude rim to witness the rising sun. During last year's international Harmonic Convergence, a small multitude gathered there for a sunrise meditation. For others the mountain presents a mighty challenge. Each August, runners gather in the main town of Kahului at 5:30 a.m. for the Haleakala Run to The Sun. But only the hardiest need apply. The crater road is said to rise farther from sea-level in a shorter distance than any other road on earth. In 22 miles of switchbacks you climb ten thousand feet.

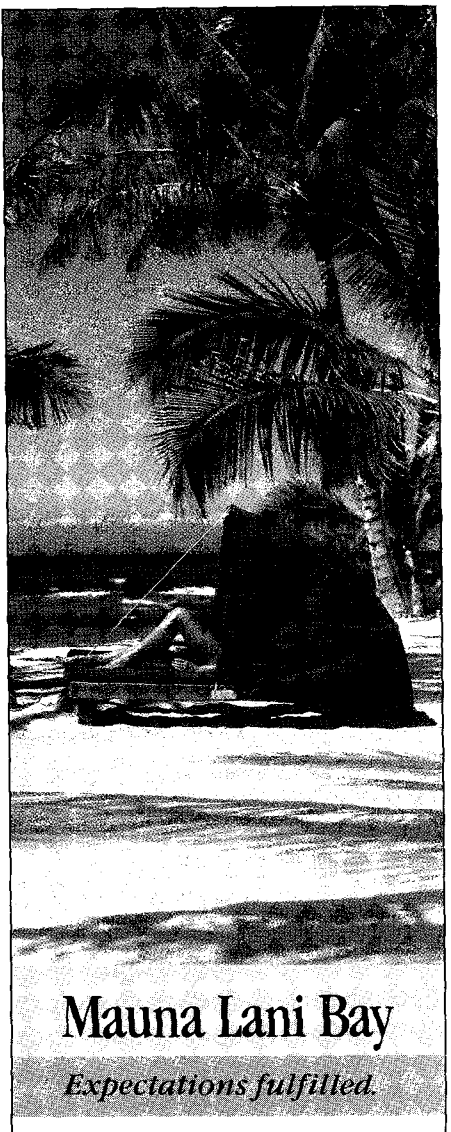
With advance planning you can spend a night inside Haleakala's crater, in cabins maintained and scheduled by the U.S. National Park Service. You can wake to the rising of the fireball that gave the mountain its name. This island is the traditional home of Maui, the demi-god and folk-hero. His mother, it is said, was having trouble dyeing her bolts of bark-cloth, because the days were too short. Since the sun was known to appear from the bowl at the mountain's top, Maui climbed up there with his trickster's ropes and snared the sun and made it promise to move more slowly across the sky, which it has done ever since.



Hawaii is the island that gave this chain its name. Known variously as The Big Island, The Volcano Island, and The Orchid Island, it is the most southerly. If Hawaii is a land of extremes, this is the island that leads the way. At its southern edge, open fissures have been erupting on a regular basis once or twice a month for the past five years. In an abandoned subdivision, at the intersection of Gardenia Way and Prince Kuhio Drive, the street is blocked by a ten-foot wall of black lava. Meanwhile, the 13,000-foot mountain peak provides the only decent skiing between the Sierra Nevada and Japan.

If you land at Keahole Airport on the leeward side you can see the flowing contour of the volcanoes that have shaped most of the island – Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, Hualalai. At the foot of these slopes, several oases are scattered along the shoreline, the sites of ancient towns and villages. Today the Kona coast is a rapidly expanding resort area, as well as the home of what some consider the most demanding physical challenge yet devised, The Ironman World Triathlon Championship, held here each October. In earlier times the Kona coast was a major population center. It was the home of Kamehameha I, who returned here in 1810, after successfully uniting the islands into a single kingdom. He established his final residence in the royal town of Kailua. Though the house is long gone, the temple juts into Kailua Bay looking much as it looked 180 years ago. It stands one block from the town's main

Like Fuji and Shasta, Haleakala inspires reverence.



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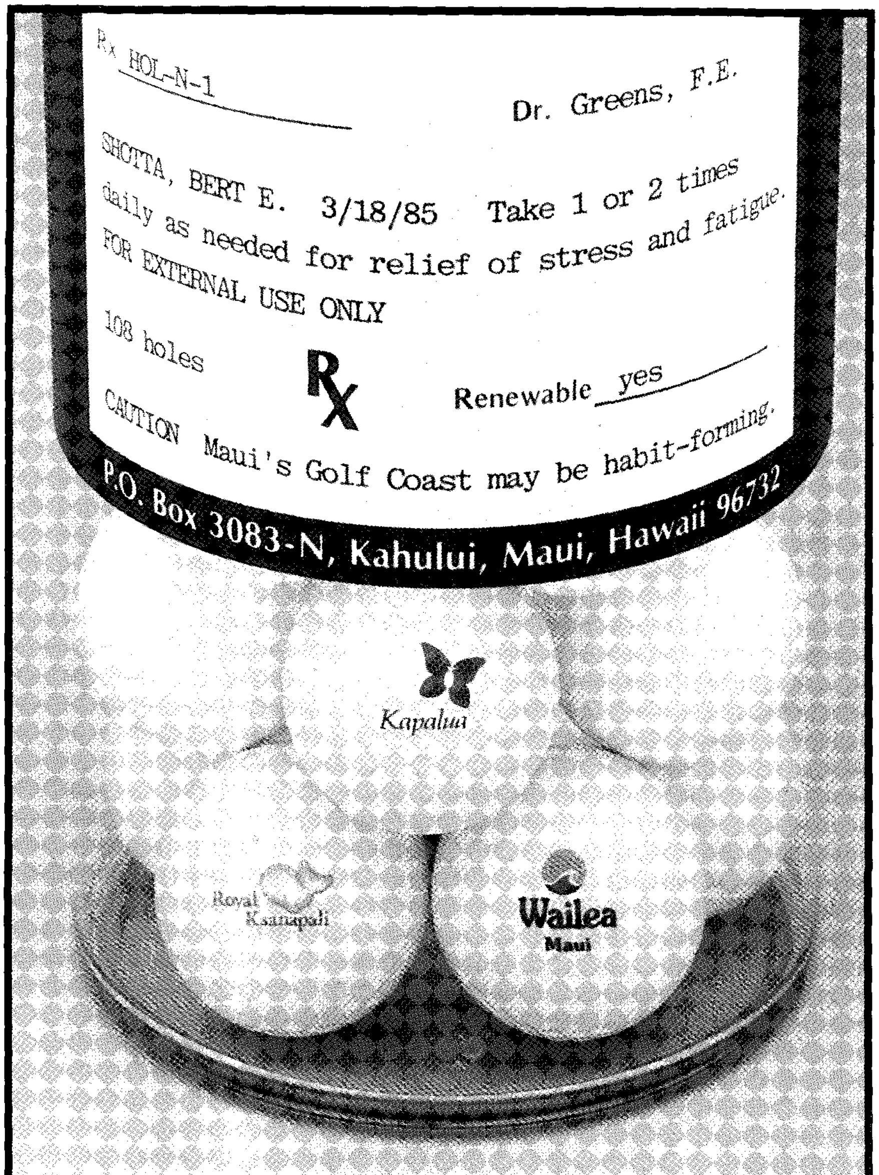
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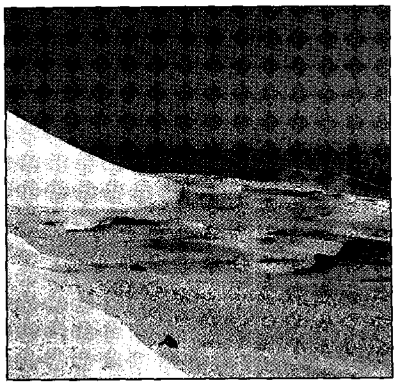
MAUI'S GOLF COAST

intersection, just past the boat dock on the grounds of what is now the King Kamehameha Hotel. It is called *Ahu'ena He'iau* (ahu'ena is its name; he'iau, pronounced heh-ee-yow, means a place of worship). A foundation of closely fitted lava rocks makes a black peninsula. It holds a steep-roofed thatch house, a fine re-creation of the Hale mana (house of spiritual power), a place for prayer and serious meetings. Here the priests made contact with their gods, whose figures are depicted in wooden totems, knees bent, fists clenched, mouths stretched as if calling out a warning.

All through these islands there are hundreds of sites and stone structures that have survived – walls, rock carvings, house foundations, altars, and temples. For the traveller with a taste for history, this coastline has the best preserved of all Hawaii's sacred sites – from the six-acre City of Refuge National Historic Park, at Honaunau, to the lichen-spotted stones heaped at Mo'okini He'iau on the northernmost point.

Some residents believe this island has a special power. They say it is the presence of these old and venerated sites. Or they say it is because Pele, the volcano goddess, has made her home here. Or they say the volcanoes themselves generate an electro-magnetic field ten times what is normal on the planet. Most say it is impossible to visit Mo'okini or to walk across the lava fields near Kilauea Caldera and not feel *something*. Around that north point he'iau, the ancestral atmosphere is so rich with what Hawaiians call *mana* you can feel it like a coating on your skin.

At Waldron Ledge, on the Caldera's western rim, you can gaze down at Kilauea, which is a gray skillet of lava about three miles wide. It is raw and empty and burnt and still, yet somehow never at rest. Distant steam plumes rise from vents, constant reminders of the magma bubbling somewhere below the stillness,



The annual Merrie Monarch Hula Festival on The Big Island.

looking for its next outlet. The air itself, at four thousand feet above sea level, has uncanny weight.

There is another way the special power of this island reveals itself. It can be seen and felt and heard at the Merrie Monarch Festival, held each April in the port city of Hilo. This is Hawaii's premiere gathering of hula performers, and it is not named for the butterfly. Its name refers to Hawaii's last king, David Kalakaua. Mid-way through his reign he commissioned a palace to be built in Honolulu, Italianate in style and called *"Iolani"* (Bird of Heaven). It is now an elegantly restored monument to his love affair with European ways. At the same time, he singlehandedly revived the hula, over loud protests from influential missionary families who had been trying for decades to suppress it.

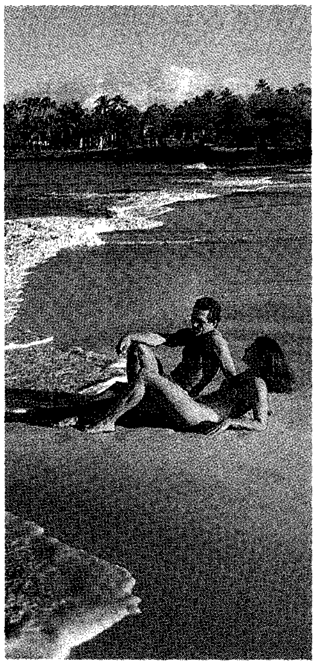
HAWAII

Why revive the hula? In its original form it was narrative dance designed to enhance the meaning of *mele*, the singing chants that contained the legends, the genealogies, the stories of origin, and the history of his people. As a man of the late 19th century, Kalakaua saw his native culture dying. He knew that if the hula died, the chants could die, and if the chants died, history itself might disappear. For much the same reason, hula is today central to the Hawaiian renaissance. With the dance has come renewed interest in early drumming, in music and poetry, in costume, and styles of chanting, and in the language itself. The best of the *kumuhula* (choreographer/teacher/master) are the bearers of an ancient flame. Good hula can be seen throughout the year – at such events as The King Kamehameha Hula and Chant Competition in Honolulu, in June; at the all-day Prince Lot Festival at Honolulu's Moanalua Gardens, outdoors on a Saturday in July, or the Na Mele o Hawaii Festival, at Kaanapali, Maui, in November. But there is no better display of the state of the art than the week-long Merrie Monarch, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary this April, at Kanaka'ole Stadium, a huge covered pavilion where the dance troupes gather.

In the older form, called *kahiko*, the dancers precede each dance with an invocation. It may be to Kalakaua, or to Pele, the fiery goddess who rules this island, or to her dancer sister, Hi'iaka. Very often the dancers resemble those depicted by James Webber, the documentary artist on Cook's third voyage, who gave us the earliest pictures we have of Hawaiian life. Their women wear knee-length skirts of ti leaves. Their dark hair billows, long and full. They wear leis of fern around their heads, and fern bracelets around their wrists and ankles. This is not the flirtatious hula you tend to see in hotel lounges. These dancers don't smile. They are intently focussed. The movements can be soft as mist, or they can be quick and bold.

The accompaniment is the rhythm of a single drum and the insistent chanting of a single voice, sometimes male, sometimes female. It is more than a ritual speaking of words. There is a poignant squeezing of notes high in the throat, like the peak moment in flamenco or blues. It is untranslatable, a haunting sound that slides between exuberance and lament, and the note itself catches something that permeates the humid and luminous air around all these islands. It is a sound that rises straight out of the earth, perhaps from the lava tubes inside the earth, to tell anew the story and the legend of Hawaii.

JAMES D. HOUSTON IS A NOVELIST AND TRAVEL WRITER BASED IN SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA. HE WAS DISTINGUISHED VISITING WRITER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN 1983. HIS COLLECTION OF NONFICTION STORIES, "THE MEN IN MY LIFE," WAS PUBLISHED LAST YEAR BY CREATIVE ARTS BOOKS.



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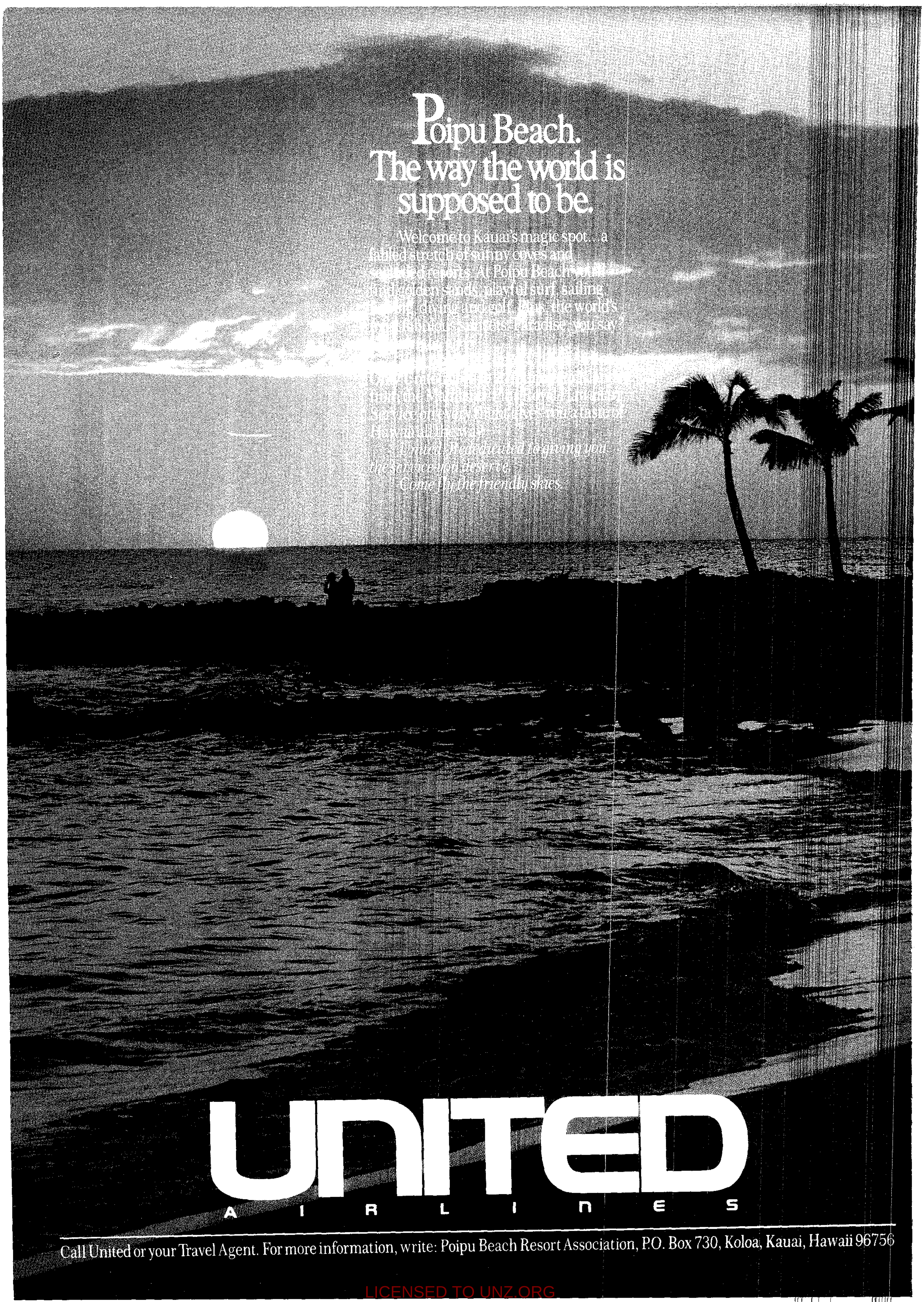

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

REBIRTH OF A NATION

SOME of the quirks of Soviet economic planning were explained to me recently by the manager of a furniture factory in Novosibirsk, the Chicago of the U.S.S.R.—a heavily industrialized city, some two thousand miles from Moscow, on the great plain of west-central Siberia. A vigorous man with a chunky body, bulging forearms, and charismatic blue eyes, he struck me as someone who would be a successful organizer in any culture—an impression that Mikhail Gorbachev, the Communist Party General Secretary, evidently shares. In a speech last summer Gorbachev praised the reform experiments that have been under way since 1984 at the furniture factory, and other selected enterprises in Novosibirsk, as an example of the success that can be achieved by abandoning the Stalinist approach to running the country.

The manager led me on a breakneck tour of the facility, including—in a demonstration of the new policy of *glasnost*—the women's locker room. The factory employs four thousand workers and produces more than half the desks and tables and other furniture made in the Novosibirsk region. One of its problems is a shortage of particleboard, and the manager said he would manufacture it on-site in the future rather than having to depend on shipments from afar that had to be arranged by various central-planning agencies in Moscow. Instead of obtaining timber products from local sources, many enterprises in Siberia have to wait while these raw materials are transported thousands of miles from forests in the European part of the country. Meanwhile, other ministries in Moscow which control the timber in Siberia ship timber products of the same type *to* the European part of the country—a costly transfer, and one of many that make the Soviet railroad system, which has to carry raw materials across eight time zones, the most overburdened in the world.

When timber and other supplies do arrive at a Soviet factory, the shipment may be notably short, because of pilfering and spillage along the way. The pilfering is not just a matter of petty thievery. It occurs because the central ministries in the capital fail to supply factories with enough raw materials, and the factories hire *tolkachi*, or "expediters," to enhance their inventories in one way or another. The spillage occurs because many railroad workers are lackadaisical or inebriated. And, precious as timber and other supplies may be, many enterprises make only perfunctory efforts to conserve the ration they do obtain. Waste is rampant because, under the peculiar logic of Soviet economic planning, the ministries regulate enterprises on the basis not of how economically they use scarce inputs but of whether they fulfill arbitrarily assigned output quotas.

"The American system is quite good—wealth depends on profit," the manager of the furniture factory said to me. "No profit, no life." In the Soviet economic-management system, however, profit has been an irrelevant notion: the quotas given to factories and farms are defined in terms of gross physical output, such as tons of steel or bushels of grain, rather than on the basis of the true value of the final product and the costs of making it. As a result, there is little or nothing to stop Soviet factories from fabricating things worth less than the ingredients they use up in the process, and while managers and workers may receive bonuses for fulfilling their quota they suffer no penalties—no possibility of bankruptcy, no layoffs—if they fail.

The net result of Soviet central-planning practices, when it comes to the supply of a particular raw material, such as timber, is that seventy per cent of the Soviet Union's annual output is effectively lost, and the country with the world's most extensive forests faces chronic shortages of all types of wood and wood by-products, such as toilet paper. The net result of this way of doing business, in terms of over-all Soviet economic performance, is what the economist Ed A. Hewett, of the Brookings Institution, describes as "a system that eats resources." The successful management experiments at the furniture factory in Novosibirsk, which included a program for allocating specific supplies of raw materials to workers and docking their pay for excessive wastage, helped pique Gorbachev's interest in wider-scale economic improvements.

Gorbachev took office in March, 1985, and announced the following February that "the really stupid situation" created by the Soviet style of central economic planning could only be corrected by "*radikal'naya reforma*." He decided to confront head on what he called the system of "petty

"I often feel woolly, but seldom do I feel very wild."

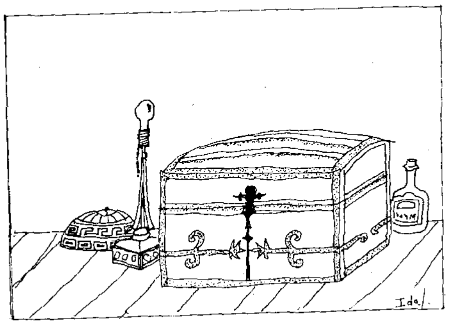
administrative guidance" that required Soviet factories and farms to await orders from on high before they did most things. That the Great October Revolution of 1917 might end up in such a straitjacket would not have surprised Lenin, who was intensely worried about the prospect of trying to administer the day-to-day affairs of the country by having officials issue orders from Moscow. He once declared, in exasperation, "Everyone in our country is bogged down in the cursed bureaucratic morass of departments. Considerable prestige, intellect, and vigor are needed to combat them daily. Departments are shit, decrees are shit." He died in 1924, and never saw the half of it. The huge administrative apparatus that Stalin established in the nineteen-thirties, and which Gorbachev inherited, is the most cumbersome economic-management mechanism employed by any industrialized nation.

Gorbachev did not appear to know at the outset precisely what kind of changes he wanted to impose on the system, but he set out to discover what changes made sense, and which ones he could get away with. To devise a reform program, which he had to do in the face of opposition from many top Party leaders—such as Yegor Ligachev, the No. 2 man on the ruling Politburo and the Party secretary for ideological matters—he circumvented the central economic organs, the Central Committee apparatus, and the Council of Ministers. He also promptly fired, retired, or demoted the senior conservative economic advisers to the government and, bypassing almost all of Moscow's advice establishment, recruited a Brain Trust from Novosibirsk—from an economic-research institute there that had been conducting management-reform experiments at the furniture factory and at other Siberian enterprises.

The economic-research institute—one of sixty scientific-research institutes grouped together in Akademgorodok, or Academic City, on the southern outskirts of Novosibirsk—was headed by the economist Abel Aganbegyan, a contemporary of Gorbachev's, who studied at the Moscow State Economics Institute in the mid-nineteen-fifties before coming to Siberia in 1961. Gorbachev met Aganbegyan in 1979, when the future Party leader was in charge of agricultural affairs for Leonid Brezhnev, and he also came to know other economists, including some with much more radical views, who advocated sweeping changes in the arrangement of the country's economic affairs. "Aganbegyan is our superstar," one of the newly influential Moscow economists told me. Aganbegyan, who insists that the Western press exaggerates his personal influence with the General Secretary, says, "As a matter of fact, we are a group of ten to fifteen people. Gorbachev has not one, two, or three advisers but a broad network of contacts."

Some of Aganbegyan's critiques of Soviet economic performance have been published in Soviet economics journals such as *Problemy Mira i Sotsializma* and in newspapers such as *Pravda* and *Trud*, but the reform proposals he offered to Gorbachev were not made public in any detail until June 25, 1987. That is when Gorbachev, in a three-hour speech that Aganbegyan helped write, announced his plan for future Soviet economic development. Emphasizing a buzzword used in a report written at the Novosibirsk economics institute in 1983, Gorbachev declared that the vast central-planning system in Moscow was no longer stimulating the Soviet economy but, rather, was serving as "the braking mechanism" holding it back. Using the experiments carried out at the furniture factory and other enterprises in Novosibirsk as proof of how a more decentralized system can work, he announced that as of January 1, 1988, Soviet factories should have the chance to exercise their own initiative and control their own destinies—and, in the process, would henceforth have to accept the risk that if they failed, they failed.

As the economist Philip Hanson, of the University of Birmingham, summarized the new initiative, "Gorbachev is a corporate raider who is doing his best to take over a particularly large company, USSR, Inc.; to carry out a management shakeout and a change of product-mix; and to launch the unwieldy conglomerate on a new and higher growth path." The existing central-planning agencies, like the target management in an unfriendly corporate takeover, do not want to surrender their power and perquisites. Gorbachev, as a result, is in the middle of what Anders Åslund, a research scholar at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, in Washington, described in an interview as "a wild fight" with Party leaders such as Ligachev and other key players in the Soviet political system. "Today, on the Central Committee, in a secret vote of who likes Gorbachev and who doesn't, I suspect he'd lose," a State Department Kremlin-watcher told me. Opposition from his peers may be a lesser problem, though, than the unpopularity of the reform measures with the general population, since they constitute a package program that calls for more work, strict curbs on alcohol consumption, and a reduction of the state subsidies that have kept meat and bread prices stable since 1962 and held the rent for state-owned apartments at levels fixed in 1928.



Perestroika—Gorbachev's program of economic "restructuring"—might be better translated as "reformation," and Gorbachev has said that the process should be regarded as a "revolution." While some Western commentators have regarded Gorbachev's talk of economic reform as a public-relations ploy, most experts agree with Sovietologist Murray Feshbach, of Georgetown University, who believes that the Soviet leader's words about changing the Soviet economy are "much ado about something."

Adam Ulam, the Harvard historian and biographer of Stalin, who is the director of the university's Russian Research Center, commenting on Gorbachev's June 25th speech in an interview, pointed out that criticism of Soviet economic ministries by the country's chief minister was hardly unprecedented. "The subject that all bureaucrats in the Soviet Union excel at is denunciation of bureaucracies," he said. It was noteworthy that while "denunciation of past economic practices was common, Gorbachev was also criticizing the present," Ulam added. "The whole program looks so much at variance with what they've been accustomed to that as yet it's very difficult for anyone to imagine that it really could be done. Gorbachev is largely a cheerleader—saying 'Let's do this! Let's do that!'—but how is it going to work out exactly? We just don't know."

The abrupt but peaceful switching of economic systems proposed by Gorbachev—if all or a significant portion of it is actually carried out—will be a new mode of historical change, the prospect of which has surprised many students of Soviet affairs. A diplomat in Moscow told me shortly after the Gorbachev speech, "We had not seen any comprehensive reform program suggested in print, and here one is not only proposed but adopted, and it goes quite far. Another system has been suggested—a significant step toward a socialist market economy. The Western press had previously overstated what was happening under Gorbachev, but then when the June plenum happened it understated the significance of what is being done."

When I asked the Soviet Embassy in Washington if it would be possible to interview Aganbegyan and his co-workers in Novosibirsk and Moscow, to try to learn more about the overhaul of the Soviet economy which they were planning, the Embassy's press attaché said, "I would like to go there myself and talk to these people to find out what is going on."

ANTON CHEKHOV, who ventured through western Siberia in 1890, wrote that he was "terribly depressed" by "the endless cold plain, twisted birches, pools of muddy water, slimy lakes, snow in May, and deserted gloomy slippery shores of the numerous tributaries of the Ob River." After his horse-drawn coach, bypassing convoys of trudging convicts, fell off the rutted highway and dumped him into yet another ditch, the muddy and exhausted author shouted, "Anyone watching us would think that we are not travelling but going insane!" Alternately frozen and flooded, the part of Siberia he visited was called by its early settlers "God's unfinished work"—the place where the Creator forgot to separate earth and water.

Novosibirsk grew up where the Trans-Siberian Railway line, which was completed in 1905, crosses the Ob River, and it is now the largest city in Siberia, with a population of more than a million three hundred thousand, and the eighth-largest metropois in the Soviet Union. The Aeroflot et that took me to Novosibirsk left something to be desired—the seats seemed to have been designed to exract confessions from their occupants—but the flight from Moscow took only five hours. Chekhov complained about Siberian hostelries and their bedbugs, and Fodor's is equally blunt in its commentary on today's Siberian hotels, such as Novosibirsk's Tsentralnaya, where I had a reservation. The guidebook warned, "The Tsentralnaya is terrible—avoid at all costs! When last we stayed there it needed replumbing and general renovation—or demolition!" It has yet to show any obvious *perestroika.*

The hotel is not the only structure in Novosibirsk, however, or in the Soviet Union, where the question of a face-lift or a more drastic solution is pertinent, but it does not take foreign observers to point this out to the Soviets. A critical overview of the Soviet economy which was leaked to the Manchester *Guardian* in 1986 was reportedly written by a group of high-level Soviet officials who belonged to the "Movement for Socialist Renewal." It described the country's standard of living as "one of the lowest in the industrially developed world." Low pay was compounded by "difficult living conditions," the study said, and it continued:

> Chronic shortage of basic foodstuffs like meat, milk and butter in a number of areas, and frequent stoppages of these products altogether in many others, have had a bad effect on people's health, especially children's, and create an atmosphere of nervousness and uncertainty, with people wasting their free time, and even taking time off work, to search for food and stand in queues. . . . The constant disappearance from the shops of first one series of goods and foodstuffs then another, the eternal hunt for the most basic goods and small everyday things, forces people to limit their range of interests to one everlasting search, leaving them neither the time nor the physical strength to satisfy their spiritual and cultural needs, and killing their human dignity. The living conditions of the rural population, especially those not living on the central state and collective farms, is reminiscent of the life of the Russian peasantry in the early part of the 20th Century.

In contrast to the situation in the United States, where farm efficiency long since made it possible for three per cent of the work force to feed the entire nation, with food left over for export, more than twenty per cent of the Soviet labor force works its farmland but still cannot feed itself and its fellow-countrymen satisfactorily. Fertile land is abundant—especially in the black-earth region of the Ukraine—but, as Roald Kondratjev, the head of the agricultural-research institute in Novosibirsk, explained during my visit there, farm productivity is low, even compared with that of other northern countries that have short growing sea-

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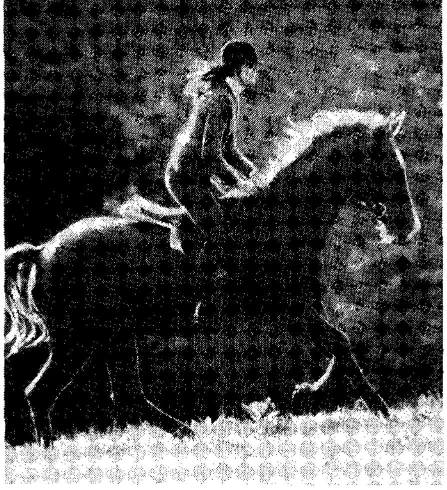

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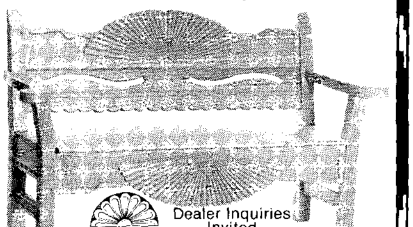

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sons. Gorbachev himself, during a visit to Canada five years ago, was impressed by the small number of people it took to run the large, highly mechanized farms there.

Before I went to the Soviet Union, an American scholar who visits the country frequently told me about one agricultural district in which there were no working tractors. There had been ten tractor-repair depots servicing the area, he said, but each of them had been padding the monthly progress reports it submitted to the ministry of agriculture. The ministry staff, noting how quickly tractors were being fixed, decided that the region did not need so many tractor-repair shops, and started closing some of them down. Those remaining still kept filing exaggerated progress reports, and the ministry staff closed more down. After a few years, it was so hard to get any maintenance work done in the region that its entire tractor fleet was idle. This story seemed apocryphal. However, a Soviet official who grew up on a farm near the Caucasus Mountains and once made his living driving a harvester—Mikhail Gorbachev—has confirmed similar accounts of what has happened down on the Soviet farm.

The inadequacy of food supplies which results from low Soviet farm output per acre and per worker is compounded by inability to transport to the cities the crops that do get produced. An estimated twenty to thirty per cent of Soviet grain is lost in transport or rots in the fields, and the waste and spoilage of fruits and vegetables may be greater than sixty per cent. Transport difficulties arise for as basic a reason as the lack of passable connections between many Soviet farms and the main road system. The harvesting and shipping of crops are so difficult that students and factory workers have to be drafted into the effort to supplement the twenty-five million workers already on the farms, and even military trucks are commandeered to get crops to the cities. (Those factory workers who are not asked to help with the harvest may skip work anyway; in Novosibirsk, workers by the hundred leave the instrument factory there each summer in order to sell vegetables on the black market.) Vegetables are in such short supply that the average citizen has a thirty to forty per cent vitamin deficiency. Special food supplies as well as luxury items are reserved for Party officials and other privileged groups. They live at Western levels, or better, but the average Soviet has to stand in the kind of food lines that Americans were forced to join during the Depression. Even in Moscow, where food supplies are better than in most Soviet cities, I saw hour-long lines near the Kremlin of people, including Soviet Army officers, who were waiting to buy a ration (two) of scrawny frozen chickens. In Red Square, the showplace for the annual displays of the latest Soviet military gear, I had to fend off local teenage black marketeers, who kept pleading with me to sell them my beaten-up sneakers for the equivalent of the average Soviet worker's monthly wage.

If consumer goods were only temporarily in short supply, the Soviet people might dismiss present economic shortcomings as finite and bearable. Yet the shortfall is pervasive and persistent, the result of long-term neglect of consumer needs in favor of heavy industry and the military. Shifting priorities will not be easy, for even if Gorbachev could wave a magic wand and order the building of new factories for producing consumer goods various bottlenecks in the construction industry and the rest of the supply system would immediately frustrate such an initiative. At the furniture factory in Novosibirsk, where consumer goods are produced, the manager explained that a shortage of labor in the local construction industry made it difficult to get something as simple as a new garage built to house the factory's trucks. Instead of waiting for the builders to come, he decided to have his own workers do the job. A do-it-yourself approach, however, will only get so far, because many other factors, such as the lack of concrete, bring work on new Soviet factories and apartment buildings to a frequent standstill. The concrete that does become available is of such poor quality that walls and floors soon begin to sag and crack: the result, often, of the lack of chemical additives needed to make the concrete withstand winter temperatures or the lack of steel reinforcing bars (despite the fact that the Soviet Union is the world's leading steel producer).

Labor shortages and low labor productivity extend construction time so severely that Soviet factories, judged by world standards, are often obsolete by the time they are built. A quarter of the unfinished construction projects in the Soviet Union today were begun as long ago as the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies. The planners in Moscow grade construction enterprises on the basis of how much work is in progress, not on the basis of work completed—an incentive system that encourages Soviet builders to take on new construction projects although they know they may not be able to handle them. Gossnab, the state supply agency, adds to the construction delays and the shoddiness of the work, because it provides only one out of three construction workers with essential measuring devices. Moreover, a survey of Soviet construction sites found that of the rulers, measuring tapes, carpenters' levels, squares, scales, electrical instrumentation, and related equipment supplied by Gossnab thirty per cent gave inaccurate readings. "It is incredible but it is a fact that the majority of all the concrete building blocks that are made today fail to meet the specified dimensions," the Soviet construction-industry magazine *Stroitel'* reported.

Each year, in response to the chronic imbalances in supply and demand of various commodities, the central ministries in Moscow issue thousands of urgent orders for corrective action. Gosplan, the state planning committee, is in charge of both long-range planning and day-to-day, catch-up micro-management of the economy. Gosplan has issued some peculiar directives over the years, Hewett noted in a study of the Soviet economy published in February by the Brookings Institution. For instance, recent directives insisted that Tochmash, a factory that produces machinery for making hosiery, which is in very short supply, switch to the production of "consumer goods in which it has no experience . . . motorcycle parts, flashlights, and a plastic brain-teaser game for children." In the West, specialization has long been regarded as the key to economic efficiency, but that principle seems to be overlooked rather frequently by Soviet planning ministries. Thus, Minmash, the Soviet Union's ministry of machinery, oversees the

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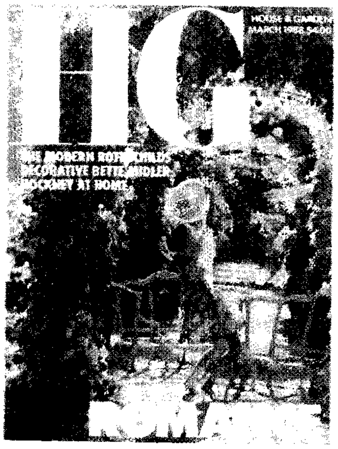

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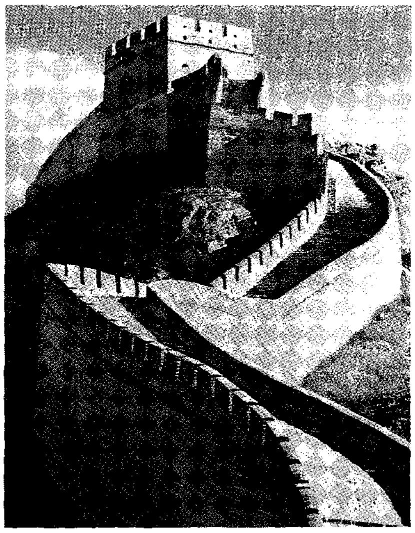

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manufacture of ammunition for the Red Army and also supervises the production of thirty per cent of the country's bicycles. Minaviaprom, the ministry of aviation, is in charge of the assembly lines turning out bombers, fighters, civilian aircraft, and a third of the Soviet Union's vacuum cleaners.

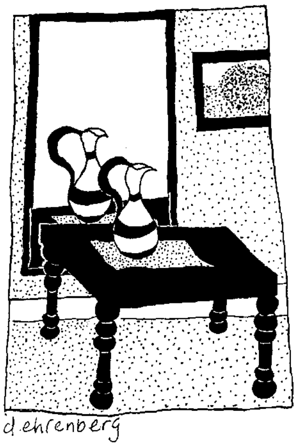
Since the factories and farms throughout the Soviet economy are run by administrative fiat from Moscow, the crisscrossed lines of authority in the central-planning system create some significant snags. But what is perhaps most impressive about the central-planning system, Hewett observes, is that, despite its numerous absurdities, "this 'implausible' system somehow works." In little more than two generations, it has turned a backward peasant nation into an industrial superpower, second only to the United States in over-all output. While the American economy was caught in the doldrums of the Depression, the Soviet Union was rapidly building new factories. During the Second World War, Soviet planners were able to relocate entire industries from the western provinces of the country to places like Novosibirsk (the manager of the furniture factory was one of the evacuees during the Nazi invasion) in order to keep up production of war matériel. After the war, the Soviets recovered faster than many Western economists, and their own planners, had thought possible, and since 1960 the country has had a faster growth in new jobs than any other industrialized country. In a number of specific categories such as machinery, to which planners have assigned a high priority, the increases in output have been astronomical. The resulting hardware may not be elegant technologically, or as reliable or as versatile as that produced by American industry. Nevertheless, it keeps the Soviet economy churning. And, despite its backwardness in obvious respects, "this same economy produces a titanium-hulled 'alpha-class' submarine that goes faster and deeper than any submarine in the world," Hewett continues. "It has also managed to build one of the world's largest natural gas distribution systems by relying primarily on domestically produced compressors and turbines, and all of this realized ahead of schedule, despite the U.S. administration's best efforts to delay construction. With its own technology the Soviet Union has sent remote-operated machinery to the moon, established and maintained a working space station, drilled the deepest oil wells in the world, and developed a technology for producing continuous cast aluminum that U.S. defense contractors have purchased." Assigning its highest priority to military production, the country has more than corrected the situation Lenin found in 1917, when he observed that the Russian Army, lacking the horses to drag its artillery pieces, was not even capable of organizing a retreat.

As the plans for *perestroika* indicate, the pluses and minuses of central planning have obviously not gone unnoticed in the Kremlin. The prospects for any significant reform have to be assessed guardedly, of course, in a system that has been bogged down by so many ideological scruples. Yet changes that may be of profound significance are being made in the way the country works and, more important for the future, in the way some of its leaders, heeding the experiments in Novosibirsk, have begun to think.

GORBACHEV has said that *perestroika* was not an "enlightenment that came all of a sudden, within a single night." Nor was he the first whose eyes were opened to the need for change. Cycles of reform and experimentation have been a regular part of Soviet life. Even Stalin, committed though he was to the collectivization of agriculture, paused for a while to permit private plots, in order to help ease the tremendous famine that collectivization had produced. Khrushchev, in the late nineteen-fifties, impetuously plunged Soviet farms into a scheme for decentralized management and crop changes—a fiasco that helped bring about his ouster, in 1964. The following year, his successor, Aleksey Kosygin, introduced reform measures that bear some resemblance to the current initiatives, but the effort, which received little high-level support and a great deal of low-level opposition, sputtered and failed quickly. Kosygin was pushed aside, and during the nineteen-seventies stagnancy, and Leonid Brezhnev, ruled. While various tinkerings with the administrative arrangements were carried out—there were occasional price readjustments, for instance—no reorms on the level attempted by Hungary or China or other socialist counries during that decade were even eriously considered by the Soviet leadrship. Its General Secretary was genrally regarded as being asleep at the wheel.

It was not until 1982, when Brezhnev died, that a deep reassessment of the Soviet economic system began in earnest. Yuri Andropov, his successor, had the reputation of being a hard-liner. Still, in his first public speech as General Secretary, Andropov surprisingly opened up a general debate within the Party about the wisdom of the path it had laid out for the country. Andropov's predecessors had routinely criticized Party officials and workers for not living up to Communist ideals—for not pulling their assigned oar. What Andropov appeared to question was not so much individual or collective diligence as the over-all design of the boat. In an address on November 22, 1982, he said, "In general, Comrades, there are many unresolved problems in the economy." Instead of issuing the traditional call for rededication to the orthodox Marxist-Leninist way of doing things, Andropov wondered aloud whether some new economic game plan might be necessary. "I have, I should say, no fixed prescriptions" for getting the nation out of its economic quagmire, he said. "It falls to all of us—the Central Committee of the Party—to find answers."

The response to Andropov's call for new thinking was an outpouring of ideas. The country has a number of research institutes, where, despite the narrowness of official economic doctrine, various "reformist" Soviet economists and social scientists had been permitted to analyze Soviet economic problems. They also studied the reform experiments of other socialist countries, and even tried to see what could be learned from the American, Western European, and Japanese economic successes. A stunning indication of the development of Soviet economic thinking was a report prepared in 1983 at the economics institute in Novosibirsk by the sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya and intended for use at a seminar attended by members of the Central Committee. The document, which was leaked to Dusko Doder, the Moscow correspondent for the Washington *Post*, and came to be called the Novosibirsk Report, reached the frank conclusion that "the centralized system of rules and norms of economic activity, which was created over the course of decades, has now become tangled to an unbelievable degree and many of its elements have become outdated." When Zaslavskaya's full report was published in English in the magazine *Survey*, Philip Hanson wrote in an introduction, "The most sobering reflection of all is that, for all that is known in the West, reports as radical as Zaslavskaya's may have been the staple diet of high-level, closed seminars for years."



"There are two rather consolidated camps among Soviet economists," the economist Gennadi Lisichkin, a member of the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System, and a specialist in Soviet agricultural problems, explained to me. "There are the adherents of continued reliance on central planning and those who believe that Soviet enterprises would be better off letting market forces—as in the free-enterprise system—regulate the economy. "Until recently, anti-market economists represented the absolute majority," he said. "The pro-market group is now free to speak out. I think central planning for consumer goods is unnecessary. The problem is how the existing mechanism can be smashed and the economy can be made to work for man."

Nikolai Shmelev, an economist who works at Moscow's Institute of the United States and Canada, has been more outspoken, daring to criticize Communism's seminal thinkers. "Marx and Engels . . . had no more than their conjectures to offer on what the economy should be like after the victory of that revolution," he wrote in the June, 1987, issue of the Soviet literary magazine *Novy Mir*. "Right from the start, the whole of this system was distinguished by economic romanticism mixed up with a good deal of economic incompetence." Shmelev went on to cite reliance on "pressure tactics, exhortations, or whip-cracking," instead of regulation by market forces, as the basic reason the Soviet Union had "one of the lowest rates of productivity among the industrialized nations." The American economist Wassily Leontief, of New York University, who won the 1973 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, called Shmelev's article "absolutely astounding," adding, "It sounds like Milton Friedman!"

In terms of basic Communist ideology, advocating a market economy, or anything close to it, is more than just heretical; it is the moral equivalent of calling for the return of slavery. "Until recently, we rejected the role of the market, and any suggestions connected with markets were referred to as 'revisionism' and 'bourgeois trends,' " Lisichkin told me: "Previously we believed competition was unhealthy." According to the Communist Manifesto, which Marx and Engels published in 1848, free enterprise may raise production and greatly lower the prices of manufactured goods. But these achievements are at the expense of tremendous injustice to workers, they believed, making them "sell themselves piecemeal . . . a commodity, like every other article of commerce . . . consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market." Capitalism left "no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment,' " and it posed the constant threat of unemployment. However, permitting the law of supply and demand to rule has proved more efficient than any other economic decision-making mechanism, and consequently some Soviet economic pragmatists want a more decentralized system, where this can happen. "Despite our theoretical thoughts," Lisichkin said, "life pushes us to the practical solution of our problems." Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese Communist Party leader, who was quicker than his Soviet counterparts to see the need to back away from Communist ideological precepts, made the same point when he observed, "I don't care if a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice."

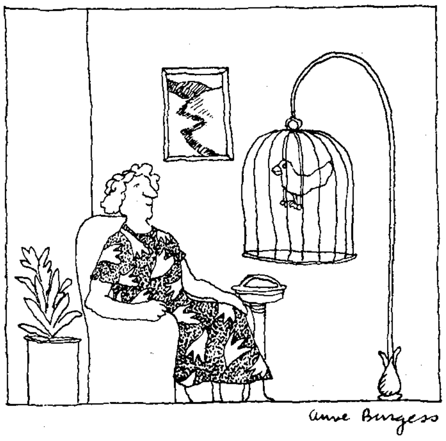
Andropov's rule was cut short by illness, and his successor, the enfeebled Konstantin Chernenko, whose tenure as General Secretary was also brief, advanced no decisive economic-reform programs. It was left to Chernenko's successor, and Andropov's protégé, Mikhail Gorbachev, to make a frontal assault on the Stalinist system of economic management.

Gorbachev appears to have sized up his country's dubious economic status with extraordinary objectivity. One of his predecessors, Nikita Khrushchev, had taunted the capitalist countries with various boasts, the politest of which was made in 1959: "We are confident that the day is not far off when our country will catch up with our American partner in peaceful economic competition, and then, at some station, we shall draw alongside it and, giving a greetings signal, move on." Gorbachev, acknowledging statistics that Aganbegyan and the other researchers at Novosibirsk have put together, is willing to concede that the Soviet Union has not caught up with the United States—in fact, that it is barely in the international economic race anymore—but he is not ready to throw in the towel. "Gorbachev concluded that the U.S.S.R. is in danger of becoming a third-rate—not a second-rate—power in the twenty-first century," an American diplomat in Moscow told me, and that he must undertake heroic measures to save his country from such an ignominious fate. According to the United States Central Intelligence Agency, the Soviet gross national product per capita is around seven thousand dollars, which would put the country on a level comparable to Great Britain or Italy. It is hard to reconcile such an estimate, though, with "what you see on the street in Moscow," as this American official put it, adding that this was better than what you see in the rest of the Russian republics, where general living conditions are "abysmal." In the capital, housing remains critically short, with millions of people still living in communal apartment buildings where several families must share a kitchen and a toilet. As for housing in the countryside, a study published last fall by the Joint Economic Committee notes, "As recently as 1985, new housing built by farms was remarkably primitive. A survey of such housing showed that only 30 per cent had water, sewer, and central heat. A very large proportion of this housing (42 per cent) was built with no amenities whatsoever."

One Western economic observer I spoke with in Moscow dismissed the C.I.A. estimates out of hand. "The Soviet economy should be compared with Mexico's or Malaysia's or Portugal's," he said. The C.I.A. statistics, he continued, relied at least partly on some of the Soviet Union's own statistics and failed to account for the slips between cup and lip. Thus, Soviet ledgers show that the country mines vast amounts of raw materials and produces large quantities of steel and intermediate industrial commodities every year. Yet the ability of Soviet factories to make cars and refrigerators and airplanes and other finished products out of these ingredients is much less than what Western countries achieve. This expert continued, "The Soviets need about three times *all inputs to produce the same quantity* produced in the West. G.N.P. per capita is about a third of what the C.I.A. says, defense expenditures about half. I prefer to use simple standards—health standards, average life expectancy, infant mortality—as opposed to statistics that you can't trust, and when I do Soviets end up with those comparable to countries at around twenty-five hundred dollars per capita."

A C.I.A. overestimate of Soviet economic achievements would tilt in the direction favored by the Pentagon and the defense-spending lobby in the United States. Ironically, some Soviet economists I spoke with in Novosibirsk said they distrusted their own government's statistics, believing them to be biased to make the economy look good, and sometimes preferred to use data from the C.I.A. In a 1965 report that was leaked to the Western press Aganbegyan himself wrote, "We obtain many figures . . . from American journals sooner than they are released by the Central Statistical Administration." Vyacheslav Seliverstov, the deputy director of the economics institute in Novosibirsk, told me during my visit, "I agree with the C.I.A. that the rates of economic growth are less than those that are published officially. Many Soviet economists have come to believe this."

In perhaps the most far-reaching indictment of misleading Soviet record-keeping ever made public in the country—it appeared in February of 1987 in *Pravda*—Tatyana Zaslavskaya condemned the "habit of speaking the kind of half-truths that, in a sense, is worse than lying." She called upon the Soviet government to stop suppressing social statistics on prob-



lems such as drug abuse, crime, suicide, alcoholism, environmental pollution, and industrial accidents, and to start publishing accurate data on the true condition of the Soviet people. If a Stalin were still in the Kremlin, the candor of Aganbegyan, Zaslavskaya, and other researchers in Novosibirsk could have got them shot. The alternative punishment of being sent to Siberia would not have been applicable, since they were already there.

THE economics institute in Akademgorodok employs some five hundred people. Siberia has only ten per cent of the country's population but between fifty and ninety per cent of its natural resources, which prompted the Kremlin, in 1957, to establish a special research center in Novosibirsk devoted to the region's economic development. Akademgorodok, which one of its admirers has called "the little town with probably the biggest I.Q. anywhere," at present is home to more than forty thousand people.

Before Aganbegyan arrived, Seliverstov told me, it was "a normal and stereotypical institute, but Aganbegyan changed it and infused it with talent from the Moscow State Economic Institute." One of the distinguishing features of the research effort he organized was to get economists away from their adding machines and scratch pads and out to farms, factories, and workplaces. In a paper he published in 1978 Aganbegyan noted that his institute had circulated a questionnaire among the managers of more than a thousand Siberian enterprises to solicit their views on the changes needed in Soviet industry. "In spite of the system, there are people who do well, who have pride in their work," Hewett told me. "Aganbegyan got out and mucked around with those people." He travels extensively in his own country both as a fact finder and now as an emissary for the Party leader, explaining *perestroika*. Aganbegyan has also served on some forty governmental commissions that formulate Soviet economic policy for such diverse questions as regional development, oil and gas exploration, transportation, obotization, new agro-industrial conepts, and the improvement of the machine-building and metallurgical industries.

Having been held back for so long or political reasons, economics is not a ery advanced science in the Soviet Union. "Only a few per cent of Soviet economists would get jobs in the West," a Western economic observer in Moscow told me. "Economists are not highly regarded in Soviet society. Pure sciences have a high reputation, not social sciences." American economists who know Aganbegyan nevertheless respect him as a competent professional, with a good background in mathematical techniques, and consider him a hero for some of the critical papers he has written, although they do not necessarily see him as a strong reformer or as very original. Soviet-émigré economists who are former colleagues or students of Aganbegyan's seem more impressed by his chutzpah than by his substantive contributions to their science. They call him a "very talented intriguer," who works the Soviet policymaking circuit, advancing ideas that may appeal to the leaders, and advancing his own connections with them. He is politically very smart, they say, and, unlike other reformers, who have directly criticized the central-planning ministry, Gosplan, he has shrewdly managed for years to maintain a good working relationship with it while aiming his criticisms at less powerful branch ministries.

One of Aganbegyan's former students, Vladimir Kontorovich, who now teaches economics at Haverford College, in Pennsylvania, told me, "There are two evaluations of Aganbegyan. He is a very gifted man, but not a practicing economist in the sense in which we would use the term in this country. There is a tendency to compare him with a Paul Samuelson or a leading professor at an American university. Such economists may be in the limelight from time to time, but they spend the rest of their time at their desk doing research. Aganbegyan has not been doing original research for at least twenty years. Under the feudal system at the institute, other people write, you sign. There were all sorts of jokes when I was a student there"—Kontorovich studied in Novosibirsk from 1968 until 1973—"about Aganbegyan not recognizing someone walking down the hall who was one of his co-authors. Instead, he has been fund-raising, doing P.R., scientific entrepreneurship, selling ideas to the leadership."

Aron Katsenelinboigen, who teaches at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and writes about the trends in Soviet economic thinking, first met Aganbegyan in the late nineteen-fifties. "He was a marvellous

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politician and demagogue—today, he's absolutely the same," he said. "He has absolute ideas—mainly common sense, in the worst sense of the word. He's so primitive, so superficial. The Soviets have to bring much more complicated ideas to *perestroika*. They need another Keynes. Aganbegyan is very controversial, he is not adequate to the task. Such a person could bring disaster." He acknowledged that Aganbegyan was "one of the pioneers in applying mathematical methods" in Soviet economics, although he "used the new tools in a very conservative way. He is very mediocre from the point of view of theory and ideas. He's very conformist." The thesis that Aganbegyan wrote for his science doctorate focussed on the use of mathematical methods for studying wages and the supply of labor, and during the presentation of his thesis, Katsenelinboigen said, he argued that, counting all the benefits of socialist life, "Soviets had the highest standard of living in the world." While a few Soviet economists in the nineteen-sixties recognized the inefficiencies of the Soviet system and advocated a shift toward a market economy, Katsenelinboigen continued, Aganbegyan was not in that vanguard. An economist at Novosibirsk who talked to him in 1965 about such a scheme received "a surprised stare."

Aganbegyan has subsequently had a chance to see what life is like around the world. A boxing fan, he was delighted, during one of his several visits to the University of Pennsylvania, to accept an invitation to see the 1974 Ali-Foreman title match on closed-circuit TV. The fight was a great spectacle. But Aganbegyan's eyes really popped, his host from Penn, Professor Herbert S. Levine recounted, not at what he was seeing on the screen but at what he could see on the floor of the auditorium. "Some very well-dressed members of the black community of Philadelphia were on the floor—including guys in full-length mink coats," Levine recalled. "Aganbegyan looked astounded, and turned to me and said words to the effect, 'This is not what we're taught in the Soviet Union about the plight of blacks in the U.S.A.' " Levine said he tried to explain the situation to his Soviet guest. "It was a surreal scene."

While new facts are supposed to help lead scientists to new theories, Aganbegyan, it is said, has switched horses so many times during his career that his dedication to market economics is questioned. An economist who has worked with him told me, "It is a great pity that Aganbegyan is Gorbachev's main economic adviser. This is an unfortunate fact. He is a talented person but without principles. He has changed his ideas a thousand times throughout his economic career." Twenty years ago, he said, Aganbegyan was promoting a plan to put the central ministries on computer and use sophisticated mathematical formulas to administer the economy. "But now he completely has dropped the idea and doesn't even mention it. He creates scientific bubbles to draw publicity and then drops them." Aganbegyan subsequently championed what he called "management-information systems" that would leave the central economic ministries in their dominant role but give computerized data to enterprise managers to aid them in carrying out their assigned plans. It was another idea that, associates say, "crashed and burned." Plant managers, it turns out, do not like computers. A recent study by the Joint Economic Committee explains, "Management is . . . opposed to computerized inventory control, since it would reveal [hidden] resource stockpiles used to ensure fulfillment of a subsequent plan, decrease the manager's 'cheat margin,' and lower the plant's chances to fulfill its production plan and the workers' chances to receive bonuses."

And now that he advocates market solutions some economists who know him doubt not just his sincerity but his understanding of what market solutions really mean. "One of Aganbegyan's pet ideas is to give a lot of independence to enterprise managers but at the same time merge industrial enterprises into a small number of units," Kontorovich said. "This is a terrible idea from an economic point of view—a monopolistic market has little to recommend itself over the present Soviet system. *Competitive* markets are what's needed." Katsenelinboigen likewise maintains that Aganbegyan doesn't understand the very sophisticated institutions that are involved in modern industrial markets and looks upon them "as a kind of Oriental bazaar." Aganbegyan is not unaware of the need to, as Lenin said, "study, study, and study." According to one joke told by Soviet economists, he reportedly admitted, "We don't know enough about markets," and then he went out on the black market and got a couple of Monopoly sets and played with them.

LIKE the timber going to and from Siberia, I was heading for Novosibirsk just when Aganbegyan was leaving, but, thanks to central-planning intervention by the Novosti Press Agency, I managed to catch up with him in transit. We met in his office in Moscow's Central Economical and Mathematical Institute, where his title is Academic Secretary. It was a simply furnished wood-panelled room resembling the niche a professor might occupy at any no-frills American university. The grass outside the building needed to be cut, its decorative fountain was not working, and, in general, the place looked as if its caretaker had been AWOL for some time. The setting, a few miles away from the grandeur of the Kremlin, hinted at Aganbegyan's odd position in the hierarchy of Soviet power—and at the limits of Gorbachev's own power.

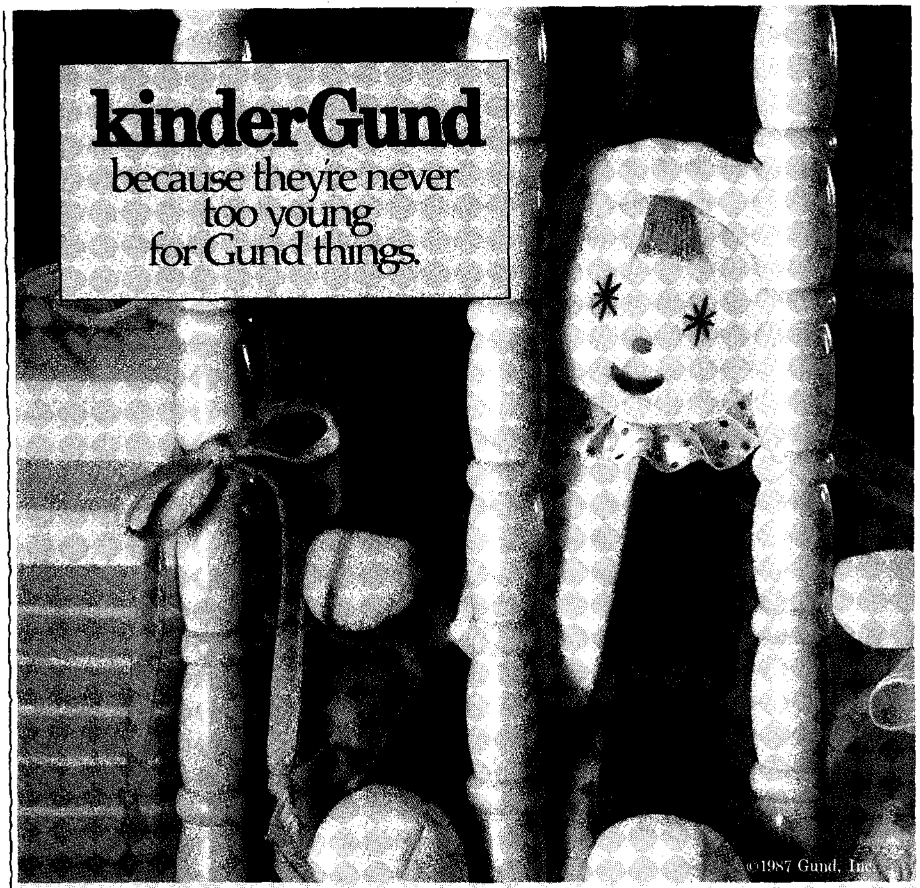
There have been rumors that Gorbachev would elevate him to various official posts, but he remains the head of Gorbachev's kitchen cabinet, not an official with line authority. (Other members of this group of advisers include the prominent Soviet economists Leonid Abalkin and Oleg Bogomolov, and the sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya.) Informality in the placement of key advisers is not Gorbachev's preference but part of his political predicament. *Perestroika* faces such strong opposition within the Politburo and the Central Committee that Gorbachev has been unable to get allies appointed to many key posts. Instead of having the principal economic ministries behind him, Gorbachev must plan strategy with a small group of advisers, who form what John Hardt, of the Congressional Research Service, calls "a circle around an empty center," for "there is no centra economic planner, no economic czar with staff and implementers."

Aganbegyan is a rotund man, fifty-four years old, with curly black hair and expressionless jet-lagged eyes that brighten somewhat when the discussion gets down to facts and figures. He speaks in a measured, sphinxlike cadence—with the cautiousness, that is, of an academic who knows that he has become a politician and, maybe, a player in history. " 'I think they should increase the price of meat next year,' is a typical Aganbegyan statement," a diplomat in Moscow told me. "It's understood that it's 'I and Misha' "—Mikhail Gorbachev—"who think this. Since June, 1985, when Gorbachev brought him to Moscow, it's been hard to find out what his own opinions are on anything."

I told Aganbegyan that I had expected to meet him in a few days in Novosibirsk, since he was still working there as the editor of the economics journal *EKO*. Oh, he replied, he had just been there, after a trip to Japan, and was in Moscow on the way to meetings in Europe. When I asked if I might accompany him for a while as he performed some of his official tasks, he responded, "I know how American reporters like to follow people—like Gary Hart." He preferred to sit at the conference table in his office and talk.

"One of the main problems in the development of our country is how to make people interested in the results of their work," he said, explaining the central focus of the economic-restructuring plan. "Until now, the interest is low. And we look for different forms and make experiments." At his institute in Novosibirsk, he went on, studying worker motivation was an essential part of the economic fact-finding program. He said he had been to the United States several times, and to other industrialized countries as well, and in his writings he had tried to make Soviet officials aware of the gaps between Soviet and world labor productivity.

The reason for the inefficiency and widespread malaise in the Soviet work force was not hard for the economists in Novosibirsk to identify, but—since economists need work, too—they went through the exercise of repeated worker surveys and interviews. The rather straightforward situation in the Soviet Union is that there is little for workers to work for—and they do not work much—since the central ministries have for decades emphasized military spending and heavy industry over consumer goods. Thus, no matter how many rubles workers earn there is



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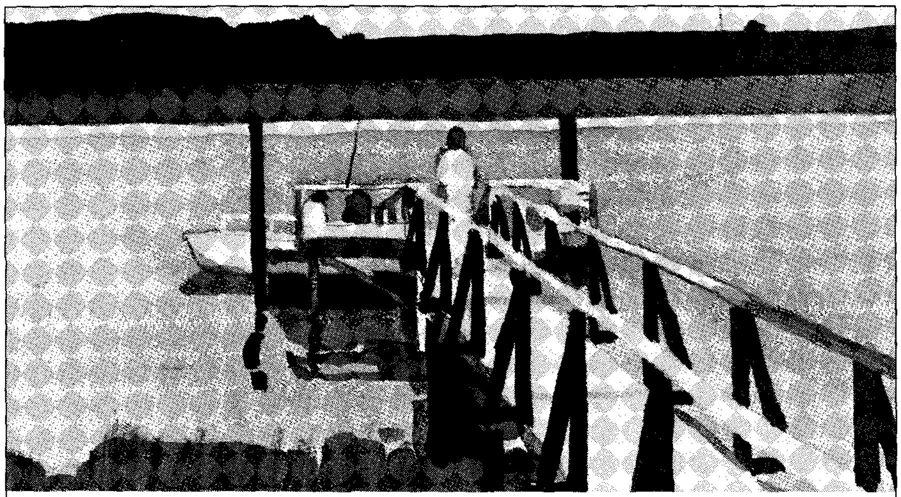

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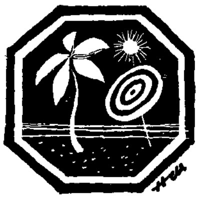
practically nothing for them to spend those rubles on.

When Stalin first imposed his system of central planning on the backward Soviet peasantry, he was able to extract their labor—aided by their poverty, his own brutality, and, later, by the fear of Hitler and the state of emergency created by the early Cold War. By the nineteen-seventies, Aganbegyan stated in one of his most influential technical articles, the Soviet Union's economy was grinding to a halt, its scientific and technical progress was "flabby," and its "historical fortunes" were in jeopardy—all as a result of the lack of any decent incentives to get its people to work. One State Department analyst told me, "For decades, the Soviets lived in a seller's market. People would take whatever was produced. If you needed pants—if it's a question of having a bare backside hanging out or buying pants—you'd buy them. But now that you have some you're not going to work to buy any more." Aganbegyan's researchers in Novosibirsk found that Soviet workers think more or less the way State Department analysts think they think.

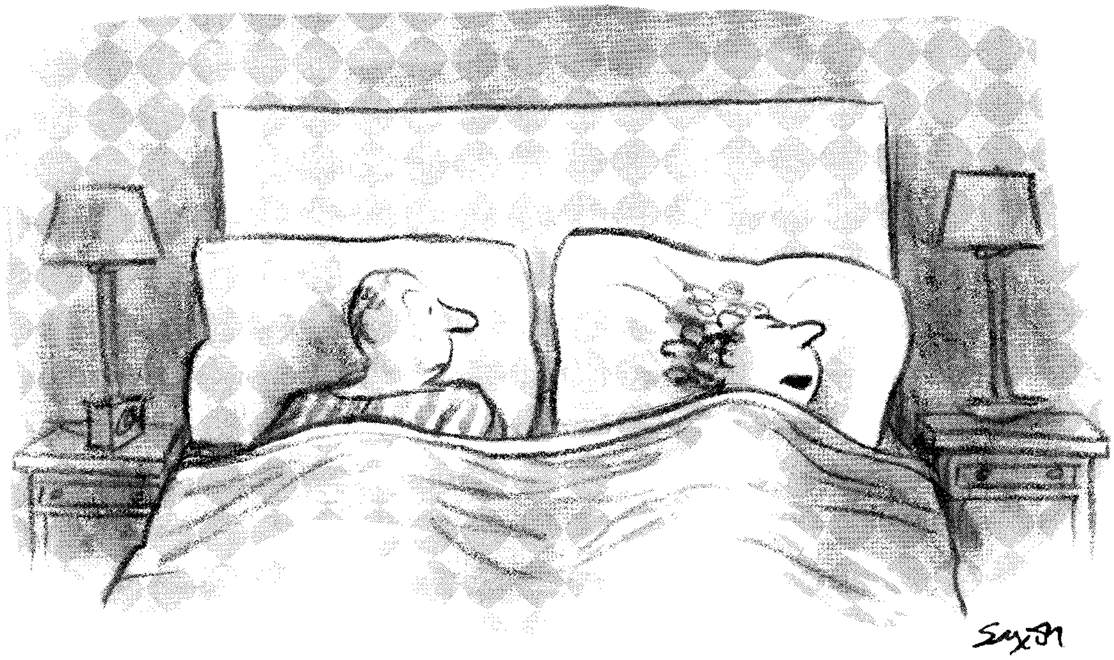
Aganbegyan's researchers documented, for example, the Soviet government's lack of success in its program to lure workers to Siberia by offering incentives such as double and triple the normal Soviet factory wage. The researchers found that even when people were induced to go to Siberia they were still not interested in working very hard, and many wanted to leave. Obviously, Aganbegyan concluded, if the country's future depends on the exploitation of Siberian resources, and if the workers are disinclined to pitch in, the Soviet Union's long-term economic prospects were grim. The government's patriotic slogans—such as the one I saw at a state farm, "Honor and Fame to Good Work"—are clearly not enough to stimulate workers in the absence of tangible personal rewards. "The whole idea of the Soviet experiment, watched with admiration by many Western idealists in the nineteen-thirties, was in the notion of collectivism and the breeding of a new type of a human who would care about the society more than for himself," the economist Fyodor Kushnirsky, of Temple University, has written in a recent paper appraising *perestroika*. Aganbegyan's researchers found that collectivism does not hold a candle to old-fashioned individual self-interest, and that if Communism wanted to survive it would have to change its tune.



H. L. Mencken once defined puritanism as the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, might be happy. Communism, which is influenced by similar asceticism, could be defined as the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, was selfishly getting a lot more than everybody else. The Soviet Constitution, accordingly, bans entrepreneurship and stipulates that no one may use any of the country's productive resources—all of which the state owns—"for personal gain or selfish ends." In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels dismissed the objection that "upon the abolition of private property all work will cease and universal laziness will overtake us." Aganbegyan has concluded that there is more to this caution than those idealistic social theorists suspected. As he puts it, there must be "a new approach to the whole system of economic incentives" in the Soviet Union in order to "arouse the people, awaken activity and labor enthusiasm."

Lenin himself actually had strong doubts about how much public-spirited work could be got out of the Russian people, whom he referred to as "softies" and "lazybones." He foresaw one long fight between the new government and the ingrained habits of its people. After the Russian civil war ended, in the early nineteen-twenties and the Bolsheviks had consolidated their political power and militarily subdued the country, he gave a speech that in many ways was a precursor of the one that Gorbachev delivered on June 25, 1987. The government had seized factories from their owners, seized land from the peasants, and tried to remove the privileges of private ownership and force collectivization of the country. Lenin acknowledged that it was not working out very well; workers found their wages unde the new system far below what they had been under the capitalist oppressors. Lenin admitted in this speech before the Tenth Communist Part Congress, in 1921, "It was a fantasti idea for a Communist to dream that in three years you could drasticall change the economic structure of ou country . . . and let us confess our sins there were many such fantasymaker in our midst." He continued, "W have sinned . . . in going too far i nationalizing trade and industry, in closing down local commerce. Was this a mistake? Undoubtedly."

In the New Economic Policy Lenin proposed in the speech, he reluctantly sanctioned entrepreneurship and the return of land to the peasants—who would have to pay a tax on their output but could keep the rest of the food and the profits for themselves. The necessity for such steps had been on his mind since 1917, when he said that the Communists, instead of shooting the erstwhile despised capitalists, should get on their knees and beg them to run Russia's factories and railways. This, of course, was only one side of Lenin—the practical side. He could also change his mind and give summary orders to have all "profiteers" shot. Nevertheless, from 1921 until 1928, the New Economic Policy prevailed—and it worked, raising the Soviet standard of living to the highest level it had reached since before the First World War (and would not reach again for almost thirty years).



"*Off with his head! Off with his head!*"

A few years after Lenin's death, Stalin crushed the New Economic Policy and set up the central-planning system that, in Shmelev's words, has made "persistent and sustained attempts to reverse the natural laws of economic life and suppress the motives for work that are natural to the human being," and has thereby been "strangling the economic initiative of hundreds of thousands and millions of citizens." In reforming the system today, he added, the Soviets may find that "we will lose our ideological virginity, which, incidentally, exists only in fairy-tale newspaper editorials."

Unlike Shmelev, Aganbegyan tries o steer clear of ideological skirmishes, and focusses on the practical questions concerning worker incentives. His most important contribution to the Soviet search for the best way to get people up for work in the morning has been the series of experiments he helped organize in Novosibirsk. The rials of various incentive systems were arried out at the furniture factory I isited and at other Novosibirsk factories, which make machinery, shoes, metallurgical products, and radios; also involved were a group of construction enterprises and two state farms.

In one set of experiments, Aganbegyan explained to me, fifteen enterprises in Novosibirsk adopted a "collective-labor organization scheme," in which total wages were computed on the basis of the profitability of the resulting work and were distributed "within the self-managing collective in accordance with each member's performance." He gave the result: "Within the year, labor productivity had gone up by fifteen per cent and average wages by six per cent, as compared with only five and two and a half per cent, respectively, in shops and sections working the old way." The results of the experiment were so good, he added, that other enterprises asked to be permitted to work on the same basis.

The manager of the furniture factory, where the experiments began in October of 1984, told me, "A new system has been introduced where workers are paid on the basis of the final product, and if it is not acceptable they're not paid." Another experiment involved the introduction of what he called the "collective-responsibility system," which meant that workers were organized into production teams, and each member, even outside production hours, would be held accountable for how other members performed. "If a member gets drunk, steals something, et cetera, the team loses a hundred per cent of its monthly bonus, which may be forty per cent of its wage," he said. A further provision of this system was that "a worker team has to pay for the wasted man-hours of other teams—ten kopeks per man-hour," or about sixteen cents—which he admitted was "not much, but it's an increased incentive to fulfill work on time."

At the furniture factory, the emphasis on worker discipline was mixed with solicitude for worker needs. The factory produces not only furniture for the region but meat for its workers—eighty thousand ducks per year, which comes out to about sixty pounds of ducks for each employee. It is typical for factories to do this, given the shortages of meat throughout the country, the manager explained. If a duck every other week helps increase worker productivity, what might two ducks produce? And as the incentives increase beyond that, won't labor increase, too? If American wage earners work hard so they can buy motorboats, R.V.s, second homes, and Hawaiian vacations, wouldn't Soviet workers do the same—provided such tangible rewards are available to them? Aganbegyan's answer is yes, and he told me, "The major problem for us is to saturate the market with quality goods, trying to force people to spend money."

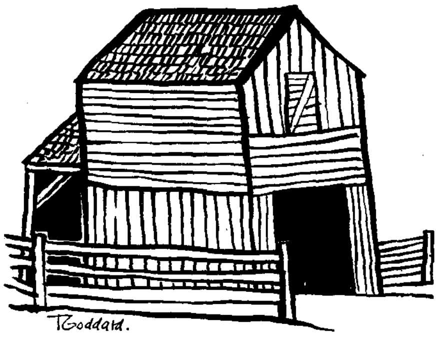
If personal selfishness was once a deadly sin in Communist eyes, some of the onus is removed under *perestroika.* Gorbachev's plan has many complex dimensions, and there are many ambiguities in the fifty-page Law on State Enterprises that was adopted by the Party in June, 1987, and the twelve other related economic decrees issued since last summer. What is clear is that one of the new laws' basic purposes is to alter the excessively egalitarian aspects of the Soviet system—which in Shmelev's words create "equal misery for all"—and create the Soviet version of a "me generation," in which individual initiative will be encouraged. Thus, in his June 25th speech Gorbachev declared that it was high time that productive workers got rewarded for productive work—even if, Marx forbid, some of them got rich at it. Encouraged by the series of experiments on Aganbegyan's economic proving ground in Novosibirsk, Gorbachev said that "it is particularly important that the actual pay of every worker be closely linked to his personal contribution to the end result, and that no limit be set. There is only one criterion of justice: whether or not it is honestly earned."

Gennadi Lisichkin explained to me, "Asceticism is not a Marxist ideal but is in our conscience so deeply that this is a problem. The hope is that *perestroika* will push forward another kind of worker—with ambitions. Strange as it may seem, many working people from different strata declare, 'We have enough.' People should be hungry for goods in order to make them work better. Our modest demands now become the main obstacle to economic progress. Human fantasy becomes rather poor: a man owns a one-room flat and he's happy and can't think of something else."

Wassily Leontief commented that the lack of materialism among the Soviet people, "the moral injunction against making money," was in some ways "one of the good aspects of their system, but it must be changed." Gorbachev agrees. Instead of urging adherence to the idealistic Communist slogan "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," which Marx made famous in his classic 1875 essay "A Critique of the Gotha Program," Gorbachev will be content if the Soviet people follow the revised socialist version "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." (As Gorbachev noted in his book "Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World," which was published last fall, "Lenin . . . knew how to change slogans when life required it.") Moreover, under the new law on state enterprises, work is supposed to be a profit-oriented activity, in which laborers should be prepared to become more than simple wage earners. According to the law, Soviet factories, like American ones, will pay the equivalent of a corporate income tax and will be free to retain the rest of their profits, which they can use as capital for expansion or to pay out as bonuses and dividends to their employees. The employees will also be given expanded rights, such as getting to participate in electing the management of their enterprises. The Party will still control the choice, ultimately, but the workers will get some qualified shareholder rights in the state enterprises, and, with the partial transfer of such rights to individuals, "private ownership"—the great bogeyman of Marx and Engels—may thereby make its entry, through the back door, into the Soviet economy.

This subtle privatization will be all the more obvious if a stock market is formally allowed to develop, and workers are allowed to exchange or buy shares in various enterprises. Aganbegyan told me that no stock market would be permitted in the Soviet Union, and that there were "strict limits" on what would be allowed under *perestroika.* He modified his answer, under further questioning, and said that socialist countries such as Hungary have now introduced a bond market and "probably we shall come to a decision at some point," but "not everything can be done at the same time." Other Soviet economists I spoke with said they expected to see a Soviet stock market develop. "You can hardly imagine how far the logic of *perestroika* will lead you," Lisichkin said.

THE restructuring program, in rough outline, has five essential components, although Gorbachev has made clear in his book and in his speeches on the subject that many of the details of the plan have not yet been worked out. First, the system of centralized planning will be modified, and instead of setting rigid production quotas the central ministries will order certain quantities of goods from each enterprise annually and let the enterprises determine the balance of production however they want, on the basis of wholesale trade with other enterprises or any retailing arrangements to the public they care to make. The ministries themselves will be pared down, with their operational divisions phased out and their focus shifted to longer-range planning. Lisichkin explained, "From January 1, 1988, the ministries will step by step lose their power. I think in some time our ministry of agriculture will be the same as your Department of Agriculture."



Some American economists, such as Kontorovich, think that the elimination of central planning is merely semantic—"reforming by renaming," he calls it—since the "state orders" that will be given to the enterprises are obligatory and, in effect, are quotas. When I asked Soviet officials if the enterprises could turn down state orders, some said *nyet* and some said *da.* Thus, Eduard Gorbunov, a member of the Institute of Economics of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, said, "We are not saying goodbye to central planning," and he told me that the state orders were mandatory, while Seliverstov said that individual enterprises would be free to turn down state orders, because others would accept them. The nub of the issue is what per cent of production will be directed by the ministries and what per cent will be set by supply and demand in the wholesale market. That detail—a critical one—is not clarified in any of the new laws, but Aganbegyan forecasts that the transition from today's hundred-per-cent state monopoly to the decentralized regime envisioned by Gorbachev will be rapid, and that by 1991 only twenty-five per cent of production would be dictated by the ministries. As Wassily Leontief noted, the sudden transition from a fully planned to a laissez-faire economy would invite chaos, and during the transition there will be great pressure from existing ministries—when problems arise in the sectors of the economy for which *they are responsible—to reassert* thei control. There will also be pressure on the ministries to do so, since tha is supposed to be their job. How Gorbachev plans to finesse the inevitable conflict between continued central control and the shift toward enterprise self-management is one of the great enigmas of his June 25th speech and of the new laws and decrees that have followed it.

The second component of *perestroika* is the requirement that every enterprise be "self-financing," which means that it will have to pay its own way out of what it earns from its sales, and whatever investment funds it receives from the state budget will have to be repaid. Enterprises will be charged for raw materials and services, and they must meet their payrolls and must take care of all direct and indirect operating expenses—all without state subsidies. Enterprises that cannot make it on their own will be closed, and layoffs by the million are forecast by Soviet economists. A few enterprises in the food-processing and construction industries have already been closed—a demonstration of the regime's seriousness—and Gorbachev, with the offer of retraining programs, is trying to prepare Soviet workers for the eventuality that the stability they have been accustomed to in the workplace is a thing of the past.

A new banking system will be established, and it will help with the financing of investments and with the maintenance of cash flow, but enterprises must pay interest. The banks themselves, which will specialize in six major activities—agriculture, industry, energy, savings, housing, and foreign trade—must also operate on a self-financing basis. The entrepreneurial spirit is even supposed to extend to Soviet research institutes. Thus, as Roald Kondratjev explained at the agricultural-research center he heads in Novosibirsk, the researchers will no longer have to go through the central ministry of agriculture but will have their own contractual relations with Soviet farms. And they will have o guarantee certain results when they recommend certain kinds of planting, and will have to compensate the farms f the results are bad; on the other hand, if the planting earns a profit the esearch institute will receive a share of it.

The third element of *perestroika* is price reform. In the past, the central dministration in Moscow has set the prices for some two hundred thouand items annually, and in many cases these prices have remained unchanged for decades. The prices of the most important commodities will still be set centrally, but the number of prices arranged centrally will be greatly reduced; more important, a new system of price setting will be phased in. Some prices will be arranged between each ministry and the enterprises it supervises; at least in the early years of *perestroika*, those prices are expected to be set high, to include an implicit subsidy to aid the enterprises in the transition to competitive conditions. Other prices will be "contract prices," set among enterprises on the basis of whatever the market can bear.

The fourth element is the freedom granted to individuals to go into business for themselves and to form coöperative ventures with others. So far, tailoring, home repairs, auto repairs, restaurants, and other service businesses have been started, although the scale of these activities is still small—a total of only about a hundred and fifty thousand people have availed themselves of the new opportunities. There are many limitations on the participation in and growth of such activities, the most important of which is that only students, pensioners, and others who do not hold full-time jobs in state enterprises may work full time at such endeavors; moonlighting from state enterprises is to be closely controlled, for fear that the enterprises may lose their best workers to the new private sector. Soviet farmers have been allowed for years to maintain small private plots, on which the productivity is many times greater than on state and collective farms. The enthusiasm of the workers, who can sell what they grow for profit, more than makes up for the fact that they are not permitted to use tractors and other machinery, these being reserved for the state sector. Similarly, the private businesses that have now been legalized may be permitted to occupy only otherwise uninhabitable premises and to buy only obsolete equipment and otherwise unusable raw materials from state organizations. Still, some economists expect that they will succeed, and may even outperform state-run businesses.

The final cornerstone of *perestroika* is what Gorbachev calls "democratization." Worker election of management is part of the program, as are multi-candidate elections for Party posts. "The workers' participation in

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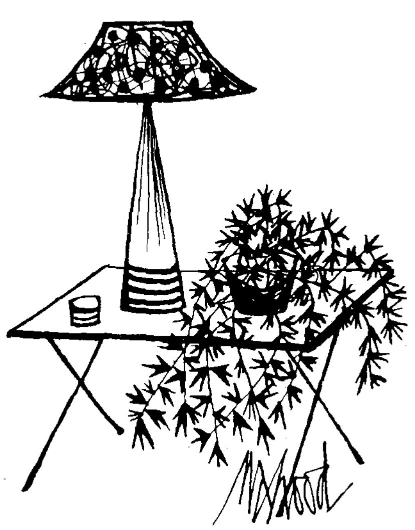
the election process, as it is visualized now, is only cosmetic, for it is far outweighed by such provisions as the supervision of the enterprise by the party and economic bureaucracy and the principle of one-man management," Kushnirsky writes. "In all fairness, however, one should admit it is unprecedented for the Soviet reality. Several years ago Soviet bureaucrats and technocrats could not in their worst dreams foresee that they would have to bid for election." *Glasnost*, a part of the democratization effort, intends to use the press to bring pressure on ministries and enterprises by exposing corruption and inefficiency. From the point of view of the Party's Old Guard, these moves toward reducing their hold on the enterprises and on the state propaganda machine are the most objectionable parts of Gorbachev's plan. Already, the No. 2 man on the Politburo, Yegor Ligachev, and the head of the K.G.B., Viktor Chebrikov, have openly challenged the democratization effort and *glasnost*, insisting that state and Party organs must, in Ligachev's words, "keep a firm grip on the levers of economic management," for "it is easier to lose that grip than to regain it later."

DESPITE the fierce high-level opposition, Gorbachev, in pressing for his program, has already scored many points in his battle with the central ministries and the Old Guard. "Gorbachev has already made impressive gains in replacing managerial deadwood throughout the economic bureaucracy with younger, handpicked allies," the recent study of his program by the Joint Economic Committee stated. "He has created an air of momentum and expectation" as he has succeeded in replacing "about 40 out of 90 heads of ministries and state committees," the study notes. "This should have had some effect in breaking up mutual protection circles, and making all office-holders inclined to try harder. Corrupt and incompetent officials have been replaced—if only by men who have not yet had their predecessors' opportunities." These personnel changes are just the first steps in the very heavy-duty political game Gorbachev has to play in order to effect decentralization. The research scholar Anders Åslund explained, "The standard view is that central administrative organs will be cut by fifty per cent—this is a question of sacking at least fifty thousand people—and these are pretty important people who need to be sacked or retired. The vested interests are clearly opposed, and it will be a difficult political game. There is a clear danger of the economy declining here and there because no decision-making structure is in place. It's quite dangerous."

How far and how fast Gorbachev wants to go, and will be permitted to go, with such sweeping changes is anybody's guess, and the transition period—during which quasi-planned and quasi-market segments of the economy will somehow interact—carries the danger of considerable economic and political chaos. Since Gorbachev faces a continuing battle with the Party ideologues, he wants to take as much advantage as he can of the precedents set by Lenin's New Economic Policy, and every detail of it is now being studied intensively by pro-market economists at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The New Economic Policy was a small chapter in Soviet economic history, but Communism, like other religions, sets great store by what its prophets had to say, and if Lenin gave entrepreneurial activity his blessing it becomes a lot easier to sell.

One school of thought, however, is that ideology is less important than the immediate pocketbook impact of *perestroika*. Many economists argue that if Gorbachev is to survive the political repercussions of stepping on so many toes he will have to offer quick rewards—a short-run demonstration to Soviet workers that *perestroika* will pay off. There are a number of ways that this might be done, and I asked Aganbegyan if it might not be possible, since it will take a while before the Soviet's own consumer-goods industry can be expanded, to import consumer goods as a way of priming the pump and showing workers something of how harder work might pay off. He did not think such an approach was feasible, given the factors affecting Soviet hard-currency earnings, which have been hurt by falling oil prices and the decline of the dollar, the unit in which its oil revenues are priced. "We are ready to buy much, but we have to sell much to pay for those goods," he said. "Now the world market is overcrowded and it is very difficult to push our way in." He was also very concerned about any buildup of foreign debt, though such concern may be an excess of conservatism.



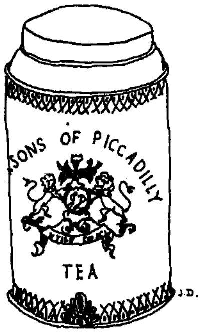
In Novosibirsk, during a break one day from interviews at Akademgorodok, I went to the lovely beach on the Ob Sea—created by a dam in the river—near the research center. The crowd could have been one gathered at any American lakeside, except for two obvious differences: few had anything to eat or drink, and no one was listening to any music. As a sociological experiment, I put on my Walkman; it elicited stares and, eventually, a crowd of children who wanted to listen to it. A small investment in well-made but inexpensive foreign consumer goods, distributed to workers at targeted enterprises in Novosibirsk, might be an experiment worth trying as, say, a substitute for duck. Hewett notes that when he first visited the Soviet Union, in 1968, his Frisbee caused great excitement, and he remarked on how sad it was to see the Soviet lack of so many little things that we take for granted in the West. One possible strategy for the Soviets, he added, as part of the newly announced program of signing joint ventures with capitalist countries, would be to approach some of the NICS—newly industrializing countries—such as Taiwan and Singapore who could help provide access to the world's bargain-basement consumer goods. "Just building a lot more shoddy apartments is not going to do it as a worker incentive," he said.

Another school of thought suggests that instead of showing workers quick results from *perestroika* Gorbachev may want to do just the opposite. "The question for the next few years is how to keep the economy from collapsing while the new system is being built and the old system is being dismantled," one Western economist in Moscow said. "People are afraid tha there will be disruption, but no Gorbachev. Gorbachev attacked Gosplan in the June 25th speech, using poor results as a lever against those who aren't with him. It gives him reason to sack them—so Gorbachev may not be interested in good results. If you don't create a feeling of crisis, you won't be able to get reform. If people see improvements quickly, they won't want to see reforms. To reform the society is really to play with fire."

AT the American Embassy in Moscow, Gorbachev's ability to tame or dismember the ministries is considered to be the key to the success or failure of *perestroika*. "The Law on Enterprises, standing by itself, is too conservative," one American economic analyst posted there argued. "Zaslavskaya has pointed out that there are too many places where rights of enterprises were subject to veto by ministries; there's talk now of establishing penalties for ministry interference with the enterprises." One example of such interference occurred after a successful experiment at the Sumy machine-tool factory. During the experiment, the enterprise paid thirty per cent of its profit to its ministry and to the state, in accordance with what is supposed to be the new general arrangement, and kept seventy per cent for itself. But after the enterprise became more successful the ministry started taking more and more of the profits. If the ministries retain the arbitrary power to cut the portion of the profit that enterprises can keep, the entire Law on Enterprises can be easily defeated.

The detailed decrees that were expected to clarify the rights of enterprises and formalize the restrictions on the ministries, and which were promulgated in August, have disappointed those Western economists who have studied them. "The decrees are terribly incoherent," Kontorovich told me. "You can read them fifty different ways. What's promised on the first page is denied on the second and then repromised on the third." Aslund commented that "the price part of the recent decrees is extremely confused—they want to have both more liberal prices and more price control. Virtually no quantitative questions are established in these decrees. They don't clarify, their quality is poor." Since Gorbachev had only his kitchen cabinet to draft the general plan for *peres-roika*, and had to turn the preparaion of the implementation plans over o the existing bureaucracies, the min-stries obviously had the opportunity to einterpret—if not sabotage—the re-orm proposals they did not like. "The decrees were prepared by the authorities concerned, not by independent authorities," Aslund continued. "They are very much the undoing of the reform attempts by the lower authorities."

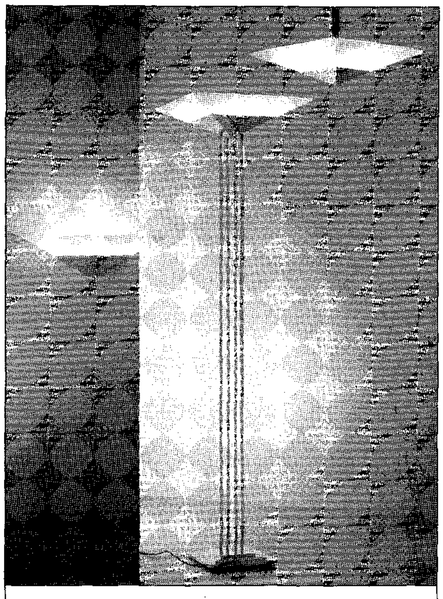
For example, instead of clarifying what interest payments enterprises must pay, the decrees specify capital charges varying from zero to twelve per cent, and, instead of stating what tax rates the enterprises must pay, they discuss rates from zero to eighty-five per cent. Just how enterprises are supposed to arrange their affairs without clear guidelines on such basics is left up in the air. Gorbachev admits in his book that "errors and miscalculations" have already been made in the rush to enact *perestroika*. One of the most serious problems, according to Hewett, is that Gorbachev was slow to recognize the priority that price reform should take over the rest of the program—prices being, after all, the stoplights that regulate activity in a market economy. Yet under the schedule now set for the carrying out of *perestroika* enterprises were supposed to have switched to a self-financing basis as of January 1, 1988, but the price-reform program will not be put fully into effect for two or three years. This situation is likely to create both an accounting nightmare and enormous confusion. The general plan for the next several years is to have the ministries set some prices and the market set others, but if an enterprise's expenses exceed its income, and it is technically bankrupt, who is to blame? Is the enterprise guilty of mismanagement? Or does the fault lie with some supply ministry that has set arbitrarily high prices for some of the inputs that the enterprise is dependent on?



Many analysts are pessimistic about the decrees, but John Hardt holds out the hope that they are just the starting position in a long process of economic reform, not the last word. Given all the loopholes and confusions, "you can't take these decrees to court," he said. "But it is not necessarily the substance of the decrees that counts—they are an umbrella under which the details can be worked out."

Even when the new relationship between the ministries and the enterprises is finessed, the conflict between plant managers and workers under the new operational rules will remain a major battleground. "There is a great psychological problem, because in every case we always say to workers 'You will get a stable wage,' and now we say 'You may get less if you work less,' and they don't understand," a Soviet economist noted. There have already been cases, he continued, where Soviet construction workers, challenging their manager's decision to cut their pay because of their poor performance, took the issue before a Soviet court—which ruled in favor of the workers. If managers are to have the right to fire or penalize nonproductive workers in the future, new legislation clarifying these rights will be needed. As in the case of new laws permitting enterprises to stand up to the ministries, the enhancement of the power of Soviet courts—the establishment of a more effective constitutional system of checks and balances—would seem to be a basic necessity. Lenin, although he was a lawyer by training, would be horrified by any copying of the "bourgeois" legal system of the West, but unless there is to be a continuing stalemate between the whims of the ministries and the needs of the enterprises, and between the demands of the managers and the rights of employees, a formal system for resolving those disputes will have to be developed. And, as the investment banker Felix Rohatyn observed in a speech he made after a recent visit to the Soviet Union, "it is also questionable whether managers elected by workers could really undertake difficult reorganizations involving layoffs." (In Yugoslavia, for example, where workers' councils were given the right to set their own wages, they tended to be overgenerous, paying less attention to the long-term growth of their enterprises than to short-term wage increases.) A further issue, Rohatyn said, was "whether the management talent is even available."

The manager of the furniture factory I visited was an impressive man, but it was clear that the factory was shown to me as a showcase operation; there was no pretense that it represented a typical Soviet factory. At the Moskovsky State Farm, near Moscow, which employs thirty-two hundred workers, and where hothouse vegetables are grown, I met another Soviet manager, not part of the management-



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reform experiments, and he struck me as being far less attuned to the spirit of *perestroika*. Under the new rules, he was entitled to sell as much as thirty per cent of his crop on the open market, and his enterprise could retain the profits from these sales. The farm managed to sell only two per cent of its crop in this way, and when I asked why, he cited the shortage of workers to retail the farm's tomatoes, mushrooms, and cucumbers. In Moscow, a few miles away, I saw crowds swarming around any truck with vegetables that stopped on the street—and I suspect that any hustling American manager, given such a marketing opportunity, would have dragged people from other tasks to reap a quick profit. That such instincts do not yet prevail in many Soviet enterprises, Lisichkin told me when we discussed the farm manager's attitude, is a serious problem for *perestroika*. I had asked the farm manager about his own extremely modest salary—the equivalent of about fifteen thousand dollars a year. It was enough to give him "a three-room flat, car, garage, and garden," he said. "What more do I need?" Unfortunately for *perestroika*, Lisichkin said, "the Soviet Union is a good place for people who don't like to work hard."

Another attitudinal problem that worries Soviet economists is the concern that enterprises have for years grown so dependent on directives from the central ministries that their managers, like overgrown mamas' boys, will have great difficulty when they are suddenly thrown out into the world of self-financing and wholesale trade. They are not accustomed to thinking for themselves, have never had to do market research or consider consumer demand, have no experience soliciting bids from competitive suppliers, and so on. When the American economist Anne Carter, of Brandeis University, asked Aganbegyan, during a recent international meeting in Vienna, about the problem of retraining Soviet managers, he replied, "Have you ever tried to teach somebody to swim when you didn't have any water?" Gorbachev's strategy seems to amount to throwing the managers into the pool and letting them learn for themselves. Rather than phase in the self-financing law, which could give his opponents time to wrangle over its provisions, he insisted in his June 25th speech that it go into effect promptly on January 1, 1988. Another decisive step he has taken to deal with management weakness is to begin a process of transferring the country's top management talent from defense plants to important jobs in the consumer-goods industry.

THERE is one pool of management talent that Wassily Leontief believes may supply the Soviets with their future business leaders. "The best entrepreneurs in Russia are in the black market," he said in an interview. "The black marketeers work out of factories—they don't just merchandise currency. The Soviets should permit the black market—gently—to expand. That would be the practical way. They have the know-how to do it. They're *not* all very savory characters, but never mind—just permit it." The Law on Individual Economic Activity would obviously have to be changed to redefine the status of the black market, and a new, face-saving title for these enterprises would also make it easier for Kremlin ideologues to swallow the pill of legitimating them. But this proposal may not appeal to Soviet reformers. For, despite their emphasis on individual initiative, old habits die hard. Zaslavskaya, though she is one of the most forward-thinking of Gorbachev's advisers, seems to have great trouble differentiating between working for rewards and what she criticized, in a recent pamphlet, as "moneygrubbing." "Here is a case in point," she said. "It was believed that the high rate of personnel turnover in the northern areas of Siberia could be reduced by increasing wages. But once this was done, the average stay of workers in the North became even shorter. It turned out that many of them went there to earn money for buying a house or a car, which they could do relatively quickly because of the new wages." That the law of supply and demand produces just such results—and that even higher incentives will have to be paid if the state wants workers to stick it out in Siberia—does not seem to be a lesson that this reformist thinker has taken to heart. Gorbachev himself, speaking earlier this month to workers at a ball-bearing factory, also appears to have flubbed this issue. He criticized some of the new coöperatives "which take advantage of shortages" and charge high prices. Yet how else are free markets supposed to work? Gorbachev told the workers that he was planning to impose special income taxes on the new class of entrepreneurs, in order to prevent "open moneygrubbing." But what will then be their incentive to go into business?

If the reformers' feelings about the morality of the new system of personal initiatives is ambivalent, the average Soviet citizen's response to the practical side of *perestroika* is also mixed. When I asked a Moscow taxi-driver what *perestroika* meant, he replied, "The good times begin." Gorbachev claims in his book that "the Soviet working class as a whole totally supports the restructuring and is ready to promote it." According to Vyacheslav Seliverstov, however, "polls show that not every worker is ready for *perestroika*." Since it means that they should work harder, may lose their current jobs, and may face higher prices for previously subsidized necessities, the program has more than enough short-run drawbacks to make people wonder whether they feel like waiting for its long-range benefits—especially if it is only their children or grandchildren who may get to enjoy them. Gorbachev is proceeding cautiously on the most controversial of the changes that will affect consumers—raising the prices of food—and is trying to give people enough warning so that they will accept the changes peaceably.

"The Soviets are a well-disciplined people," Harvard's Adam Ulam noted, "but how will they adjust to price increases and strife—the doubling, quadrupling, or whatever, of prices? It is possible that in a year or two the economy will run into a blind street and will have all the disadvantages of capitalism *and* socialism. Gorbachev may be thrown to the wolves by the Politburo or may decide himself that he cannot go so far."

The one thing that neither Aganbegyan nor any other Soviet economist has to offer Gorbachev at the moment is hard and fast, "bottom-line" numbers on whether the elements of *perestroika* really fit together. In 1981, when the Reagan Administration introduced its landmark budget and tax-cut legislation, it provided Congress with documentation on how that sweeping economic measure would work. It used formal economic models o show how, despite the tax cuts and other parts of its fiscal package, such as a virtual doubling of the defense budget, the federal budget could still be balanced. David Stockman, who prepared the backup analyses, later admitted that the Administration's optimistic figures had been deliberately doctored—with "phantom revenues" nd other "fake" estimates—to reach a politically predetermined finding. The Soviets, by contrast, do not know—and are not kidding themselves, either in public or in private, that they do—whether all the various steps being planned under *perestroika* actually add up to a feasible program. For instance, they are candid about the fact that they have not yet figured out how, without state subsidies, they can manage to keep a lid on food costs or how, without some form of price controls, they can keep a lid on inflation when they allow the market to determine the prices of various other goods and services. Rather than pretend that they know the answers, they are willing to admit that they have aims but not policies, and are trying cautiously to work out the details. Aganbegyan and the other economists advising Gorbachev can be helpful only up to a point. As Hewett wrote in a summary account of *perestroika*, "economists are best at telling you that you will be better off at 'B' than you now are at 'A'; but they are far less informative on how to get from 'A' to 'B', and the chances that you will survive the trip."

Gorbachev knew that if he waited for all the details to be worked out by his kitchen cabinet he might have to wait forever. Perfection "may be spelled 'paralysis,' " as Churchill said, but the Soviet leader, in keeping with his country's own tradition, might be better off citing Lenin's favorite maxim: "One begins action—then one can see what happens next." That seems to be pretty much the spirit in which Gorbachev and his advisers have set out on a course toward a freer economy. In December, Aganbegyan and some of his Soviet colleagues met for a round-table discussion in Moscow with a group of leading American specialists on the Soviet economy. Herbert Levine, one of the participants, said that part of the discussion focussed on the timing of the various elements of *perestroika*, and one of the most striking of Gorbachev's decisions was to try some of the hardest parts first. Instead of following the Chinese example of having agricultural reforms provide quick benefits and help create popular approval for further changes, Soviet leaders have decided to promote the modernizing of Soviet industry as the top short-term priority. The reason, which was explained at the session by Gorbachev's adviser Leonid Abalkin, was that the Soviets felt they were so desperately far behind the West technologically that if they waited they might never catch up.

As a practical matter, the Soviet economy is so large, and its operations are so tied down by traditional practices, that neither the Soviet reformers nor any Western observers I talked with expect to see within this century any major economic improvements as a result of *perestroika*. Murray Feshbach compared the proposed change in direction of the Soviet economy with an effort to turn a supertanker around in a canal. Yet "every so often there's a lake," he said, and with some luck, and some good help on the bridge, Gorbachev may find an opportunity to reverse the course of his cumbersome system.

One miracle that Gorbachev has somehow already pulled off is the nurturing of a new spirit of pragmatism in Soviet public discourse. Gone is blind commitment to Marxist-Leninist thinking. Socialism is still entrenched in the Soviet system, and there is no doubt that *perestroika* is conceived within a socialist framework, and, as Seliverstov says, "socialist principles won't be violated" in the carrying out of the reform effort. But considerable broadening of socialist concepts is being permitted. "If you take the dogmatic principles of the past, they should be changed," he said. "We believed earlier that co-ops would not find any place in our society. Now we develop them very widely. In time, we may produce enterprises with shares and will build on other principles. Naturally, we lost much time while taking dogmatic views as the basis for socialist enterprise."

As the proverb says, fine words butter no parsnips, and the proof of the Soviet political system's self-proclaimed new flexibility will be years in coming, if it comes at all. Economists of all persuasions debate whether *perestroika* will work, but the only cogent answer available is, as Ulam put it, with the patience of the professional historian, "We will just have to wait and see." Reform is a Soviet internal affair, moreover, and American experts feel that there is little we can do

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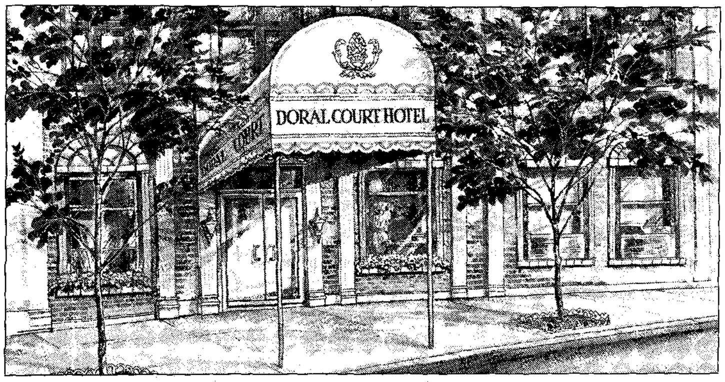

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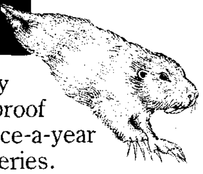

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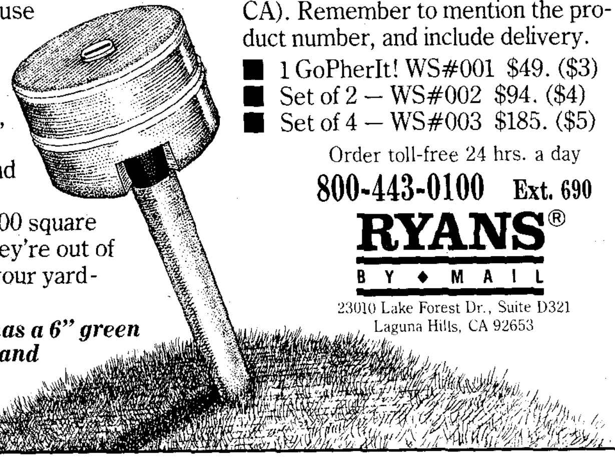

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to affect the outcome. Even if the United States wanted, say, to increase trade with the Soviets as a way of helping their transition to a more consumer-goods-oriented economy, the Soviets would have little interest in the idea. Aganbegyan and other Gorbachev advisers frown on developing "strategic dependency" on the West, American grain embargoes having taught them a lesson they will not forget soon. When I asked a senior State Department official what our strategy should be with regard to *perestroika*, he replied, "I don't think we should have a strategy, frankly, because most things we do we make such a mess of. Our ability to influence things diminishes greatly the farther we get from our shores." Hewett's response to the same question was that we should "get a seat on the fifty-yard line and watch. There's not really much that we can do. One problem is people in the U.S. becoming enthusiastic, saying 'What can we do to help?' If reform is so fragile they can't make it without us, we might as well let it die."

When the reforms of 1965 failed, Hewett said, the appropriate "death certificate" would have read "ministerial interference, aided by the lack of attention by the obstetrician (L. Brezhnev)." With Gorbachev's vigor and his dedication to today's reform effort, the chances of success are improved, but there is still the danger that it might be strangled outright by Ligachev and the existing ministries or killed slowly by the resentfulness or apathy of average Soviet workers. Vladimir Kontorovich, noting both the urgent need for *perestroika* and the lineup of forces against it, said, "A lot of people think the current situation can't be maintained, but there is no obvious way out—there may be no politically acceptable solution. This is the stuff history is made of, because when you have a clear solution, that's not history—that's engineering. That's what gives this a dramatic air." Lenin, who had some grasp of what a revolution entails, was fond of the image of "birth pains," and Gorbachev, as he tries to impose his own brand of revolution on the country, has used space-age terms to call for national self-sacrifice: "We must withstand the stresses, what the cosmonauts call big overloads, at the initial phase of restructuring." Aganbegyan offers a one-word forecast for the coming years of Soviet economic reform: "torturous." —Daniel Ford

THE THEATRE

Hail, Caesar!

HEREWITH some impressions of "Julius Caesar," the second entry in the Shakespeare Marathon, at the Public:

This is the first "Caesar" I've ever seen that is dominated by Cassius, in Edward Herrmann's towering performance—towering physically, too, with a lean, but hardly hungry, look. Mr. Herrmann brings an intellectual clarity and force to the character which make him seem the focus of the play, the instigator of the action. And the rest of the casting, as is usual at the Public, is mostly very good. Martin Sheen, a memorable Hamlet there twenty years ago (he recited the "To be, or not to be" soliloquy in a Hispanic accent), now makes the step to Brutus seem inevitable. His Brutus is self-questioning, often melancholy, and virtuous and brave—a man whose honesty, even innocence, makes him an easy mark for more devious types. Which, of course, brings us to Al Pacino's Marc Antony, a devious type if ever there was one, so obviously scheming and sinister right from the start that I oubt he could fool even this Brutus into allowing him to deliver Caesar's funeral oration. (He doesn't fool assius.) A sullen, sharp-witted Anony, Mr. Pacino takes the curse of "set piece" off that oration. John McMartin is a surprising but, as it urns out, excellent choice or a Caesar who is aristoratic, cheerful, and friendy—just the sort of ruler to nspire the devotion of rutus, among others, and erhaps the distrust of assius. His very soft "Et u, Brute!" at the stabbing s indelible. I also admired oan MacIntosh, in her ne passionate, loving cene with Brutus, and, ome to think of it, almost veryone else.

Under the sensible diection of Stuart Vaughan, he performance as a whole s always absorbing and alays clear. If you sense ome extra enthusiasm in y praise, you're probably ight. It is the fervor of the onvert; it took me a long me to enjoy and appreciate the kind ofAmeran Shakespeare presented by Joseph Papp at the Public or in the Park. (There have been some lemons, too.) The handsome setting for "Julius Caesar"—a bare stage with a flight of steps at center leading to a platform and surrounded by square, sky-high columns of brick—was designed by Bob Shaw and effectively lighted by Arden Fingerhut; the appropriate costumes were designed by Lindsay W. Davis. —EDITH OLIVER

Blanche and the Boys

WHEN Blythe Danner, making her entrance in Nikos Psacharopoulos's revival of "A Streetcar Named Desire," at the uptown Circle in the Square, comes around a corner of John Conklin's set and delivers her opening line ("They told me to take a streetcar named Desire"), she seems as lost in the role as Tennessee Williams' heroine was meant to be on a squalid street in New Orleans. As she cases the joint in the first scene, her accent wanders as liberally as her glance. The accent, like Miss Danner's performance, I suspect, will settle down as the run progresses. Miss Danner is too serious and intelligent an actress not to develop in the role, and even in the course of an evening grows in the part. But, though her Blanche Du Bois stops veering between a stage Southerner and an English actress playing Blanche, she never seems like a real person.

This in itself would not necessarily have been a great problem. Blanche is not primarily a realistic figure, after all. She's not so much a character as the surface of a character built up of mannerisms and throwaway lines. "Please don't get up," she says with charming irony to a roomful of poker players. The irony is for our benefit—a joke between her and us, in which we temporarily become the imaginary audience Blanche is forever playing to. Miss Danner, perhaps aware that charm will eventually make Blanche pathetic—and unwilling to appear so—delivers the line as though she really expected the men to rise. Her performance is full of unlikely gestures or gaps where gestures should be. Asking Mitch for a cigarette, she points a finger that is more comradely than coquettish. Passing Mitch on his way out of the bathroom, confronting Stanley in only her slip, she is unconcerned, though the show of prudery—lip service to conventionality—is what Williams' Blanche is all about.

Of the other principals, only Frank Converse, playing Mitch—the nice-man-with-a-mother-at-home whom Blanche almost snares—seems completely comfortable in his role, and much in the production seems amateurish. There is a school-play quality to the sound effects and overhasty

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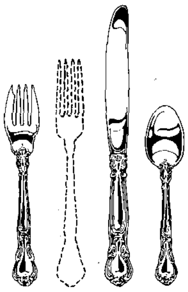

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lighting cues. As Stanley, Aidan Quinn is miscast. Watching him, you find yourself wondering what it would have been like to see Montgomery Clift in the role. Like Clift, Quinn seems to specialize in playing Clean-Cut Young Everyman. His sexual magnetism tends, like Clift's, to inhere in his being cast as a figure who is in some sense sexually off limits: the brother, the best friend, the priest. When Clift was called on to play an actual sex symbol, he usually failed, much as Quinn does here. Quinn is a little overeducated for Stanley, in any case. (Not knowing quite how to deal with Stanley's bad grammar, he often emphasizes the wrong word.) He's too much a man of the eighties to make sex seem menacing, and he sounds strained saying nasty or unpleasant things. Delivering the line "I don't like to be swindled," he might be talking to a clerk at a discount appliance store. As Stella, Frances McDormand seems equally out of place—or incongruously *in* place; she's right at home in a world of beer-swilling poker players. The earthiness is there but not the worn-away gentility that would enable us to believe in her Belle Reve upbringing.

Part of the trouble with this revival may be an inability of these young actors to understand the values of another time and place. It must be hard for an actor of Quinn's age to know how to deliver a line like "Where are *your* fox pieces, Stella?" It must be equally hard for an actress of Miss McDormand's age to play the idea behind Williams' sexual symbolism. (In our culture, sex speaks for itself.) When Stanley talks about pulling Stella down off the white columns of her plantation background and how much she enjoyed it—"And wasn't we happy together? Wasn't it all O.K.? Till she showed here. Hoity-toity, describing me as an ape"—neither Quinn nor McDormand seems to have any conception of what this speech is about. They are like young actors in a period piece who have no notion of what long engagements used to mean because nobody has explained it to them.

A good deal of the criticism surrounding this production has focussed on past performances of the key roles. But I never saw Jessica Tandy as Blanche, and my only acquaintance with Brando's Stanley comes from Elia Kazan's 1951 film. The problem, it seems to me, is not so much the great performances themselves—the public's *experience* of them—as the way in which they have changed the popular perception of Williams' characters. In our memory, Stanley and Blanche have come to embody campy melodrama in relations between men and women.

If Mr. Psacharopoulos was going to change the dynamics of the play anyway—have Stanley play the rape scene like a seduction, as he does—he might have considered tinkering with some of the play's other values. Is it necessary for Blanche to be completely crazy from the start? What if she weren't? Wouldn't that be more poignant? Or for Mitch to be completely sympathetic? He might have striven for a different *kind* of realism; after all, notions of what is and isn't realistic have changed a good deal since Elia Kazan directed "Streetcar." It may be that in calling for a more subdued, toned-down Stanley Mr. Psacharopoulos was trying to distance the play from its clichés. If so, he chose the wrong character to tinker with, and succeeded only in dismantling the mechanics of its drama.

"BOYS' LIFE," at the Mitzi E. Newhouse, is a postmodern comedy of manners. Written by Howard Korder, it takes place in and around a big city and follows the fortunes of certain young men as they try to make their way in the world of women. Don (Jordan Lage), Phil (Steven Goldstein), and Jack (Clark Gregg) are the sort of men who try to seduce women by telling them how much they want or need them. When the women point out how piggishly they have behaved, they reason, "I just think you should realize that I've been under a lot of strain lately." These guys don't mind *doing* unforgivable things so much as hearing them described. Manic Phil does unforgivable things and talks about how bad he feels for having done them; amiable Don does things he does not even seem to realize are unforgivable, like a sleepwalker; bitter, discontented Jack (the funny one, who makes jokes that we, but not his friends, are expected to get) claims not to believe in any such thing as wrongdoing. In each case, Korder examines the mechanisms of narcissism to find where it detaches itself from morality.

Cannily directed by W. H. Macy, "Boys' Life" is the most balanced and intelligent comment on the battle of the sexes I've seen in a long time; with a superb cast, which also includes

Felicity Huffman, Melissa Bruder, and Théo Cohan, it provides an evening of unmixed delight. The play is insightful, and eminently quotable. In style and structure it resembles David Mamet's 1974 "Sexual Perversity in Chicago," and that is hardly surprising: the producing organization behind "Boys' Life," the Atlantic Theatre Company, is made up largely of students of Mamet and Macy. But while "Sexual Perversity" is mainly bout how men behave with women—he discrepancy between the way they ome on *with* women and the way they ome on *about* them—"Boys' Life" is nore about the thinking that shapes nen's behavior. The wordplay in Mamet's title was on notions of what onstitutes "perversion" in relations etween men and women. Korder's lay is about shared notions of man- ood and the fiction in what it is that nen think they want. The joke here is hat the women turn out to be the best 'men."

Mr. Macy's production is nothing if ot hip and full of visual gags that cho the theme of simulation: a young an playing air guitar, a party created y opening a door. James Wolk's sets re as witty and knowing as any of the laywright's one-liners, and some of e performances are electrifying—articularly Miss Bruder's and Mr. regg's. Best of all, though, is the cret that Korder keeps back: in a oda, he brings on a new character, ho changes our perception of every- ing that went before. Finally, ough we've had male narcissism dis- cted and anatomized for us, we're rced to accept these men as their omen accept them. Closing our eyes, e put our heads on their shoulders d take them home.

—MIMI KRAMER

* * *

Llama owners Jane and Jerry Bou- eaux will discuss the nature of llamas as est speakers for the Trail Ridge Riders orse Club on Tuesday.—*Photo caption the Estes Park (Colo.) Trail-Gazette.*

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- Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank, without having a single American soldier stationed in its territory. Still, the superb military installations, the air and sea lift capabilities, the equipment and food storage capacity, and the trained manpower to maintain and repair sophisticated U.S. equipment are instantly at hand in Israel. It is the only country in the area that makes itself available to the United States, in any contingency. It is the only country in the entire Mediterranean basin area that has consented to the installation of Voice of America transmitters on its territory.
- There is no other country in the Middle East except Israel that can be considered to have a stable government or populace friendly to the United States. There is much danger that any military aid to Arab countries, and military equipment given or sold to them, will suffer the same fate as the untold billions of dollars and priceless military secrets that were lost to our enemies in the debacle of Iran. Is Saudi Arabia more stable? Egypt? Jordan? Iraq? Kuwait? Judge for yourself!
- Only a fraction of the aid given stays in Israel. By far the largest share remains in the U.S., where it is spent with American defense contractors. Peter McPherson, administrator of the Agency for International Development, estimates that every billion dollars of aid to Israel creates 60,000 to 70,000 jobs in the United States.
- Compared to the $1.8 billion yearly military aid to Israel, the U.S. contributes on the order of $130 billion(!) every year to the defense of Europe and about $30 billion to the defense of Japan, Korea and the Far East. 340,000 U.S. troops are stationed with NATO and 30,000 U.S. troops in the Far East. In contrast, not one single U.S. soldier needs to be stationed and put at risk in Israel. U.S. military analysts estimate that the U.S. would have to spend the equivalent of $150 billion a year in the Middle East to maintain a force equivalent to Israel's.

There are many other benefits that the U.S. military derives from Israel. Israel is the only country that has gained battlefield experience with U.S. weapons. This experience is immediately conveyed to the U.S. Enormous quantities of captured Soviet weapons and defense systems are turned over to the U.S. military for analysis. Israel, in the light of its experience, continually modifies U.S. weapons systems. For instance, Israeli scientists have made over 200 improvements in the F-15 alone. It would be more in line with reality if military aid to Israel were classified as "defense" rather than as "aid". President Reagan said it well: "The fall of Iran has increased Israel's value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can fully rely". American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain.

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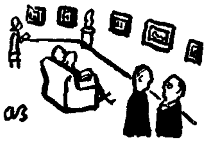
THE ART WORLD

Love's Progress

A YEAR before the bicentennial of the French Revolution, New York is in the midst of a Fragonard revival. Its centerpiece is the Metropolitan Museum's big show of the painter's work. Though the exhibition is one of several the Met has devoted in the past five years to the French rococo—a show of François Boucher, Fragonard's master, preceded it—this one seems to have had a deeper effect on New Yorkers than the others. The critic Dore Ashton, whose twenty or so previous books have mostly been concerned with postwar American art ("About Rothko," "American Art Since 1945," "The New York School"), has now published a book entitled "Fragonard in the Universe of Painting," which treats Fragonard as a great, almost abstract "pure" painter. And many people, not just critics and historians but casual fans and museumgoers, seem to feel that Fragonard, for so long fixed in our imagination as the last master of French court art—the last lapdog—is in some way our contemporary. One theory about Fragonard's current popularity seizes on a supposed similarity between the era reflected in his art and our own era: two societies devoted to pleasure, with a swelling undercurrent of grievance and poverty. Fragonard painted on the brink of one apocalypse, and we (the argument goes) teeter on the brink of another. A second theory suggests that Fragonard moves us so deeply because we recognize in him the first "modern" painter—"the father of Impressionism," as the dust jacket of the Met catalogue puts it, and "the first action painter." It may be, however, that Fragonard moves us not for either of these reasons but because his work depends on a shared ideal of happiness—one that we are almost embarrassed to see given form.



Jean-Honoré Fragonard was born in 1732, the son of a *gantier-parfumeur*—a maker of scented leather goods—in the Provençal town of Grasse. He was a prodigy, and became the protégé of Boucher before he was eighteen. This apprenticeship might have stereotyped Fragonard as a decorator, and kept him out of the Prix de Rome, the big history-painting contest that was the bane of French artistic life at the time. But Fragonard apparently wanted to go to Italy, and the prize for the winner was a fellowship in Rome. He entered the competition in 1752 and, without any formal training in perspective or design, managed to win it.

Fragonard arrived in Rome in 1756. It ought to have been an exhilarating and frightening place for a young artist. Almost every day, he could have seen the continuities of art being disrupted in a way that they had not been since the Italian Renaissance. Just the year before, the archeologist Winckelmann had published his "Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture," which counselled a new love of plain form and simple outline, and eventually sparked the first real episode of "primitivism" in Western art. A few months later, Edmund Burke published his "On the Sublime and Beautiful," making popular the idea that darkness and fear could be aestheticized. The two books put into words what was already becoming evident in pictures. Winckelmann dominated one circle of artists in Rome; Piranesi, whose engravings anticipated Burke's ideas, dominated another. The crisis in sensibility was brought to a head by a natural catastrophe: an earthquake that annihilated the city of Lisbon. The Lisbon earthquake (as is famously evident in "Candide") was the Hiroshima of the eighteenth century. It destroyed the Enlightenment faith in the benevolence of nature, just as the bomb destroyed our faith in the benevolence of science. "Never before has the Demon of Fear so quickly and powerfully spread horror throughout the land," Goethe was to write. Mme. de Pompadour even gave up rouge for a week.

Fragonard spent most of his time in Rome drawing trees. It was as if a young disciple of Matisse arriving in New York in 1947 and finding Pollock pouring paint, Rothko coping with primeval terror, and Clement Greenberg publishing polemics in *The Nation* had chosen to go off and sketch Coney Island. He went to the Roman suburbs—to the neglected and overgrown Villa d'Este, in Tivoli—and, in red chalk, drew willows, poplars, umbrella pines, lemon trees, laurels, and, above all, cypresses.

There are five of these drawings in the Met show, and they suggest that Fragonard played a curious trick with perspective—or perhaps perspective played a curious trick on him, which he learned to exploit. What look like single trees—big cypresses bowing and curtseying at each other—usually turn out on closer observation to represent whole alleys of trees collapsed into one or two soft forms. (This collapsed perspective is the source of the gentleness of contour that enchants ever in Fragonard's mature landscapes.) Like any works in a refined style Fragonard's landscapes can sometimes look almost comic. His cypresses, resting precariously on their little trunks resemble the overstuffed fops in Rowlandson, top-heavy with wigs and *paunches, and mincing on tiny shoes* But at their best the trees are like smoke clouds that have just emerged from a fire—caught in a moment o apparently stable form before they dissipate into the air.

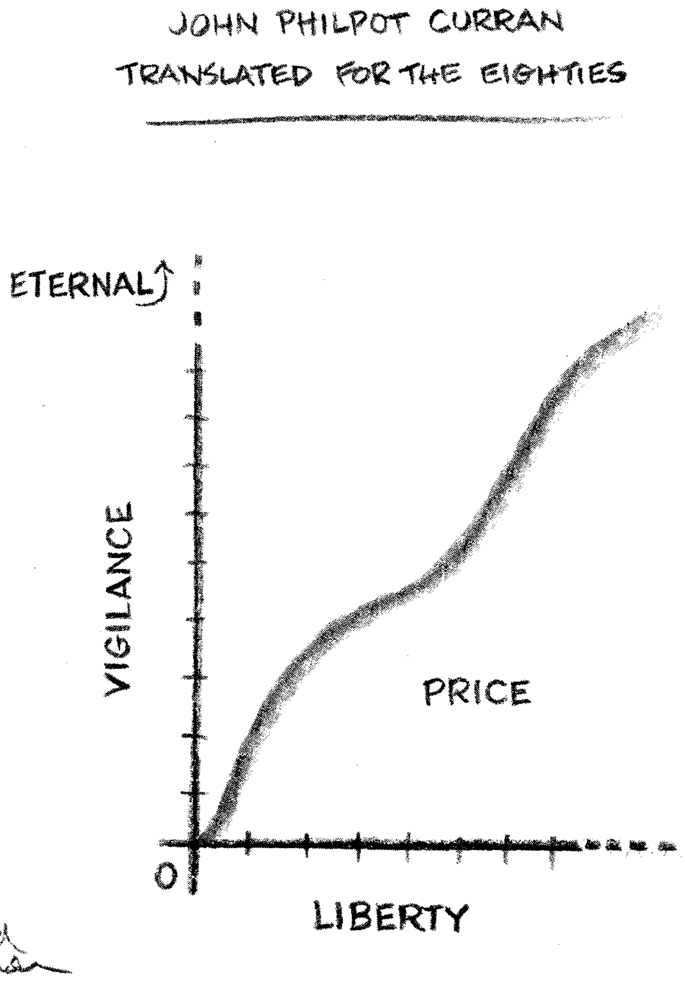
After Fragonard returned to Paris in 1761, the vision that had been granted to him at the Villa d'Este had to be made to fit the conventional *rococo genres—idyll, pastoral, fête* His landscapes of cypresses needed t be populated. The occasion came i the early seventeen-seventies, when h painted, at Mme. du Barry's commission (she had just become the King mistress), the pictures that New Yorkers know as "The Progress of Love. Since 1935, when the Frick Collectio opened, the Fragonard Room, containing the fourteen-panel series (th six major scenes are complemented b smaller, decorative panels), has probably been the most popular room of pictures in New York. At the bottom of well of foliage and shadow, an adolescent boy pursues a teen-age gi through the overgrown park of a abandoned castle. The landscape ha often been called a fantasy. It is in fa a compound: the cypresses of Tivo seen in the rose-and-pearl twilight the Île-de-France. The story told the panels of "The Progress" is har to follow. There is a meeting, an embrace, a desolate moment, and anoth meeting, but in precisely what ord these should be viewed (is the fir meeting or the second the reconcili tion?) is unclear. In some of the ne Fragonard literature it's argued th there *is* no right order—no story at a Pierre Rosenberg, the author of t Met catalogue, suggests that the pa els are meant to be a kind of patte book of the poses and tableaux of romantic love. Dore Ashton goes so far as to suggest that the girl in each scene may be different.

Without a story to tell, a religious faith to propose, or a philosophical principle to illustrate, the lovers offer us only themselves. Fragonard seems to have asked: What do people in love look like? What *should* people in love look like? His answer—that they should look ardent, stylish, nervous, energetic, eager, and underweight, and that they should be shy about looking each other (or the spectator) in the eye—is so familiar and natural an answer that it's difficult to grasp that it's not "natural" at all. Fragonard thought it up. The pictures were called in their time "*amours des bergers*"—a pastoral with shepherds. This was a standard, even stilted, form, like operetta at the turn of the next century. Boucher populated similar pastorals with small inflatable nudes. But Fragonard's heroine resembles one of those wild girls in fluttering drapery who in Greek reliefs and Renaissance terra-cottas had represented not amorous invitation but passionate energy. Fragonard dresses her in a fashionable silver gown, and she wears a dainty ruff. She is a maenad, but she is up on her toes, and not rioting but dancing. Her sexuality is all potential, held back by fashion and by nerves. She is glamorous.

Who was the Fragonard woman—this alert, intelligent, swan-necked girl? She may have been a ballerina. In the seventeen-sixties, Ashton tells us, Fragonard became a habitué of the Opéra ballet and an intimate of the Opéra's *première danseuse*, Marie-Madeline Guimard. (Conceivably, he became her lover. Fragonard was tiny and vain, and liked to think of himself as a ladies' man. He loved to draw bulls with fringes of hair and mooning eyes, and it's hard not to see these as symbolic self-portraits, like Géricault's horses or Delacroix's tigers.) Guimard was beautiful in a new way—slim ("two dogs fighting over a bone" was the famous mot about a number she performed with two male dancers) and self-consciously "delicate" and reserved. She had a long, oval face, gray hair, and a pointed nose. Fragonard's portrait of her, which is in the Met's show, is by far the most tightly painted picture of his entire career; it's as if he wanted to make a blueprint of each plane and interval of her face and throat.

In an episode that essentially destroyed Fragonard's career, however, "The Progress" was rejected disdainfully by Mme. du Barry, who apparently thought it embarrassingly old-fashioned. Why did "The Progress" fail? How can it be that what looks irresistible in Fragonard is irresistible only to us—that what we recognize as the pattern of romantic love seems to have looked decadent and vulgar to his most knowing contemporaries? It may be that, dazzled by the emerging new styles, they could not see that he had recorded something original in a dying one.

The Met catalogue reproduces the murals, by the minor neoclassical artist Joseph-Marie Vien, that replaced Fragonard's rejected "Progress" and satisfied du Barry. The Vien lovers are Olympians, drawn in the approved "modern" style—austere and linear. They are pretentious and oddly puritanical. Fragonard, stripping his subject of mythological or philosophical ambitions, makes his pictures seem more lyrical to us. In the eyes of his advanced contemporaries, though, he may have seemed to reduce love to *petit bourgeois* flirtation. With its party clothes and prom-night manners (the lovers in the Vien pictures all wear togas or classical drapery), "The Progress" may have looked kittenish and silly to them, and Fragonard, relying only on pose and gesture and energy—high-rococo rhythms and ballet-girl manners—may have seemed shallow. Two hundred years later, we value Fragonard's invention more fairly: the lovers are trying out the pantomime of a new ideal of romantic love in a castle garden whose statuary and décor are devoted to the faded ideal of courtly love. There is something genuinely prescient in this: while the style of Fragonard's fêtes suggests the courtly melancholy of Watteau, the imagery suggests an almost Victorian dream of happy couples, contented babies, and public entertainments. They are sometimes described as idylls of intrigue, but in fact these idylls are as monogamous and domestic as a company picnic.



IN the years just before and just after "The Progress," Fragonard painted a series of portraits that are traditionally called "Portraits de Fantaisie." They are quickly and freely painted portraits of his circle of friends, and Fragonard hung them in his rooms in the Louvre. (He had gone to live there at a time when it was a kind of artists' co-op.) These portraits are a cross between a Polaroid and an idée fixe: Fragonard is said to have claimed that each was painted in an hour. Some of them, like one of Diderot, seem to record visits to Fragonard's room by well-known people. Others seem to be strange, exploratory exercises in

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dressing up and acting out. The sitter turns as if surprised, his eyebrows shoot up, his eyes gleam. These pictures are like portraits by Frans Hals, but without any interior psychology. They are relentlessly sunny, and (aside from the portrait of Guimard) not at all particularized. They seem to express not something generously observed but something narrowly imagined—a set of facial types that are the physiognomic equivalent of the eager, ardent hands and bodies of the lovers in "The Progress."

Fragonard used the types and expressions from these "fantasies" as the armature for other portraits, more carefully composed. Just outside the room of "fantasy" portraits, the Met has hung, side by side, Fragonard's two most remarkable portraits of this second kind, which are in some ways the strongest single paintings of his career. One is of a man posing next to a globe; the other is of a girl reading, seen in profile (the famous "Liseuse," from the National Gallery in Washington). Side by side, they suggest the odd double nature of Fragonard's legacy—the fragile and uncertain and yet occasionally powerful way in which he was able to send his imaginary types out of his room and into the world.

In the first portrait, the sitter is not wearing a wig and has loosened the collar of his yellow tunic; his shiny bald head is turned vigorously to the right, and his gaze is at once contemplative and eager. His features are delicate, ingratiating, and romantic. His long musician's fingers just rest on the top of the globe, which sits on his desk. Beneath the globe, and projecting across its face, is a set of paintbrushes. It's an intimate portrait, with an affectionate teasing about the resemblance between the shiny globe and the bald head. The catalogue explains that this is a portrait of Jérôme de Lalande, who was one of the great astronomers of the period, "organizing, on a world-wide scale, the observations made in 1761 and in 1769 of the passage of Venus in front of the sun."

The question of what Lalande "really" looked like is unresolvable, but none of his other contemporaries, at any rate, thought that he looked anything like this. He was famously ugly, and in other portraits and caricatures of the time (five or six are reproduced in the catalogue) he is shown with a lantern chin, beetle brows, and a perpetual scowl. The longer one looks at Fragonard's portrait, the more one senses not a manner but an obsession: a doggedness of transformation which seems, in its loving, benevolent way, as crazy as that of any of the "mad" portraitists of the period—the Austrian sculptor Messerschmidt, for instance, who gave each of his sitters the same clenched grimace until he was making busts that were all grimace and no sitter. The grace and charm of Fragonard's portraits seem nearly as fixed in purpose as Messerschmidt's—as far outside the world, and as much a part of a private vision and personal mythology.

If the Lalande portrait, for all its charm, makes us feel that Fragonard's work remains a side chapel in the history of painting, the "Liseuse" tells a different story. It's such a familiar and lovable picture that it's hard to see how completely new an ideal it represents, and what an anomaly it remained within Fragonard's work. With its flattened space and medallion-like profile, it represents the only occasion when he tried to come to terms with "modern" style, with the linear, archaizing manner that had blossomed in his time and was killing off the rococo. The "Liseuse" carries over everything wonderful from the "fantasy" portraits—the free brushwork, the white, shimmering light, the creamy feeling for fabric, even the ruff—but uses that fantasy framework to take possession of a little corner of reality. The reading girl is as real as the Lalande is ultimately fantastic; though she has the standardized, Guimard-like features of all Fragonard's women, she has her own presence, too. Her features are sweetened without being idealized out of existence. Fragonard, really using the ruff instead of playing with it, gives the space between her throat and her head the elegance of the "Guimard" interval without presenting us (as he so often does) with a plain piece of biological fantasy—the woman descended from a swan. Above all, the reality of the "Liseuse" lies in Fragonard's control of the lines of nervous energy that elsewhere ripple through his portraits in almost abstract patterns. Her perfect stillness and weight are disturbed only once, by her liquid hand, which almost seems to wave slowly, like a sea anemone, as she holds her book. In its own fashion, the "Liseuse" is as potent a picture as the "Oath of the Horatii": the girl is the grandmother of Mary Cassatt's and Berthe Morisot's intense domestic women; and, since she is actually and devotedly reading, not posing, she is a kind of early feminist icon, too.

On the whole, though, Fragonard entered nineteenth-century consciousness as part of what quickly became the minor currency of decoration in boudoirs and bedrooms throughout Europe. It may be no accident that the one Impressionist whom Fragonard seems to have affected directly was Renoir, who began his career painting porcelain—a trade in which Fragonard's manner lingered on. The larger claim, endlessly repeated in these months of the Fragonard revival, that Fragonard's free touch is the begetter of the Impressionist brushstroke, is based on a misunderstanding about Impressionism. "Free" painting was never in itself anything new; Hals is at least as free as Fragonard, who imitated him. Fragonard's real heirs in the nineteenth century are less the Impressionists than conventional virtuoso society painters, like Sargent and Boldini, who inherited his delight in making paint into a lacework laid on the surface of the picture. Impressionist painting took this lacework and turned it into a net for catching light.

The attempt to make Fragonard a "prophetic" painter seems at least as shaky as the attempt to make him an Impressionist. Almost every painter of Fragonard's generation was intensely aware that he or she (it was a great era for women painters) was present at a juncture in history, at a moment of change, and sought a new style—moralizing storytelling, classical revival, a devotion to the extreme—with which to chronicle that moment. Fragonard stubbornly did not. The undercurrents of melancholy, of time rushing away, which some associate with political prophecy, are simply an element in the elegiac style he inherited from Watteau. And, in any evem, the apocalypse that was coming was not coming for Fragonard or his people. The world that he idealized and glamorized—a world of popular entertainment, adoescent love, and public recreation—was precisely the world that survived, and was afterward to flourish. He was not a court artist or a painter of aristoratic types. Real aristocrats, the kind one sees in Goya or in Gainsborough, have no need to be ingratiating or put on airs. Fragonard's "fantasies," in heir desire to please, to be beautiful—to *impress*—are the masks of an merging class.

Perhaps the ultimate effect of the Fragonard revival will be to shake our easy belief in a single spirit that informs the art, manners, politics, and culture of a period. Collective styles exist; people get swept away by common problems and common pursuits. But new manners in life and new styles in art begin at different times, overlapping rather than paralleling each other; they bump and intersect, and create odd little pockets of air in which true originals can work and breathe. Fragonard lived at a time when the manners that we think of as middle-class—valuing domestic pleasures and a small circle of intimate friendships, accepting romantic love as a supreme emotional experience and a necessary overture to marriage—were just emerging. He happened to record the birth of those manners in a style that was just on its way out. At the time, this might have seemed banal; now we recognize in it the beauty of a lost ideal.

In all his life, Fragonard made only one memorable image about mortality. It's a drawing of two lovers springing up out of their graves and embracing. The vision is too much even for us. Yet it's this artistic single-mindedness and almost obsessive mythmaking that can make Fragonard seem "modern." He was, in ways, a visionary. But it was the achievement of Fragonard's greatest contemporaries and immediate successors—from Goya, at the Spanish court, to Blake, in Lambeth—to become visionaries of the real. They distilled from their experience a heightened, private language of forms and symbols and then went public, bringing that private language into the general murmur of their time. They, too, made art in a small room, but their rooms had windows, and they looked out onto the world. Fragonard's dialogue with his contemporaries is all hesitations, missed signals, and ellipses. In this sense, he is only half a modern—but that half is lodged in our hearts. His fantasies are a catalogue of our desires: she loves me, it won't rain, nobody dies.

—Adam Gopnik

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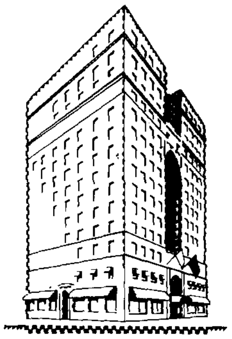

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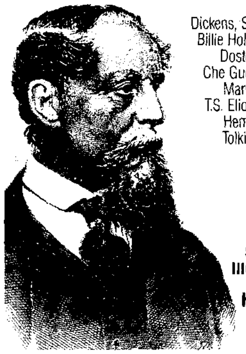

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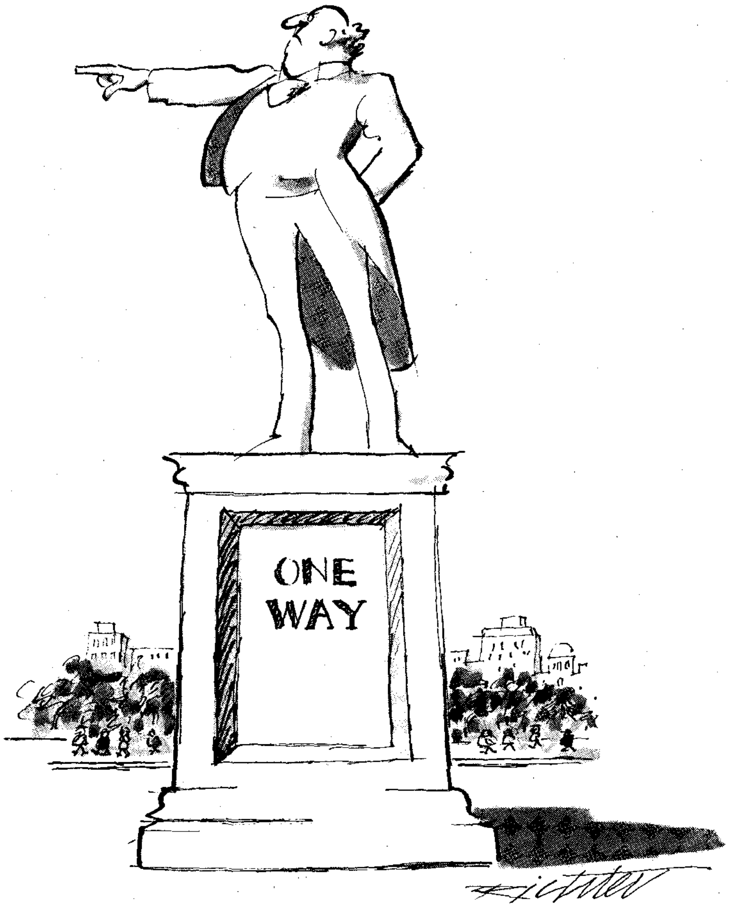
—*Lady Duff Cooper.*

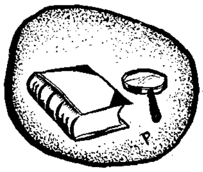
AMONG the spectators who gather on winter mornings to watch people come down the Cresta ice chute in St. Moritz there is some difference of opinion about where to plant oneself so as to get the best view. Because of its twists and turns, there is no place on the three-quarter-mile run from which either the skeleton rider—the specially designed sleds used on the course are called skeletons—or the spectator can see the entire run. Some people prefer, therefore, to watch from Finish. (All the landmarks on the run have names. The origin of names like Top, Stream, and Finish is evident. One can also imagine why a particularly nastily banked curve is called Shuttlecock, or why two curves near Finish are called Scylla and Charybdis, but to understand why a curve near Top is called Brabazon and one below Stream is called Bulpetts requires some grasp of the Cresta's century-old history.) The advantage of watching from Finish is that just before a rider goes up the short hill to reach it he is coming out of Charybdis and down Cresta Leap at his maximum speed, which, even on a middling-fast run, can reach eighty miles an hour. The top racers have been timed by radar gun at over a hundred.

To keep from going through Finish altogether, riders engage in what is known as "raking." Attached to a rider's shoes are metal appendages called rakes. There are five of these to a shoe, and they jut out like talons from the toe of the shoe, to which they are fastened by a stout metal band. The rider rides face forward and face down on the skeleton, which is only about three and a half feet long and stands about four inches above the ice. Many skeletons are equipped with sliding seats, so that the rider can position himself forward when accelerating or toward the back when decelerating. When he rakes, he extends his legs out behind him so that the rakes dig into the steel-hard ice with a sound resembling that of a hockey team in full cry. The more advanced riders—the ones who go over eighty—wear runners curving from the toe to the top of their shoes; the runners have little to do with braking but, rather, help steer and stabilize the ride. (There are small rakes at the toe.) The skeleton, which weighs about ninety pounds, has no steering mechanism at all. The rider hangs on to the front curve of the runners or to the sides of the seat, and steers by head and body movements, which are easier to describe than to carry out.

Speaking of eighty, one of the most notable Cresta rides was taken by Lord Brabazon of Tara a week before his eightieth birthday. Brabazon—known to his fellow-riders as Brab—was born February 8, 1884, and took his first run on the Cresta in 1907. He became the president of the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club—the entity that operates the Cresta run—in 1939. During the war, in which Brabazon was Churchill's Minister of Transport and also of Aircraft Production (he had been the first man to fly an airplane in England), the run shut down, but in 1946 it reopened, and he remained the club president until 1954, when he became its honorary life president. Brabazon died in May of 1964, a few months after he took his last run. On that run, he was followed down the chute by his old friend the Marquis de la Falaise, whose first two wives were Gloria Swanson and Constance Bennett. (He died of a heart attack a few years later, after being chased by a bull.) In any event, on this day Brab's arrival at Finish was awaited by a physician with a syringe full of stimulants in case Brab suffered a heart attack, and a bottle of champagne in case he didn't. Brab's first words on getting up from his skeleton were "Damn, my braces have bust!"



Just above Scylla, which is about two hundred and thirty yards from Finish, the course passes under a railroad bridge. Passengers travelling between St. Moritz and Chur are—at least, from the hours of eight in the morning to twelve-thirty in the afternoon, from the middle of December to the end of February—very likely to see a sled flashing by at eighty miles an hour beneath their train. On a recent February morning, there were two hundred and nineteen rides down the course—a record. There are about ninety-five hundred rides a season. Motorists can watch the course from Bulpetts—a right-banking curve named after a Cresta pioneer, Major W. H. Bulpett—about a hundred yards above the railroad. The more adventuresome will get out of their cars and climb some two hundred yards farther up, along a small, steep path that runs next to the track and is separated from it by a fence of nylon mesh. Every few minutes, at this point on the run, a skeleton with or without its rider comes over the edge of the chute like—as a veteran observer once remarked—a pip popping out of an orange. The riders land on an amalgam of soft snow and straw, usually more dazed than seriously hurt. A little wooden platform has been built at this vantage point, and what can be seen from it is likely to discourage spectators from taking up the sport.



The platform is just below the right-banking curve known as Battledore and ust above the left-banking urve known as Shuttlecock. The bank at Battledore is erhaps seven feet high and is exremely steep. At its base, the track, which over most of the course is about ive feet wide, is so narrow that a keleton just about fits. This hardly atters, because riders don't get round Battledore at its base anyway. They are going about seventy miles an our there, and the centrifugal force rives them up the wall, which they egotiate sidewise to the ground. Havng got through Battledore, the rider ust shift his weight almost immeditely to start taking Shuttlecock, hich is less steeply banked. If he does othing, the skeleton will simply drift p the wall of Shuttlecock and out ver the top. This design is not accital. Shuttlecock acts as a safety alve, eliminating riders who are gog too fast to be in control. So many ave been thrown out at Shuttlecock hat in 1933 a Shuttlecock Club was rmed; it has a club tie, featuring a ock of golden shuttlecocks rampant n a blue ground, and an annual diner, complete with singing. To get round Shuttlecock at high speed, the ider must slide his right hand forward nd his left hand back while raking ke crazy with the left foot. If he verdoes it, the skeleton may execte a remarkable maneuver known as Shipton-Stoker—after William K. hipton and William J. W. Stoker, ho inadvertently gave striking demstrations of it on successive rides a w years ago. In the Shipton-Stoker, e rider's legs swing straight up over e top of Shuttlecock, and the skelen dives straight down and then up e opposite bank. What is remarkable out this move is that many of those who execute it manage somehow to stay on their skeletons and finish the run. I witnessed one Shipton-Stoker in which rider and sled did a complete somersault before continuing down the track. The worst thing that can happen to a rider in a Shipton-Stoker, or in any fall, is to land in front of the skeleton. Anyone who has been chased down the chute by a ninety-pound sled moving at seventy miles an hour is likely to end up in Dr. Gut's Accident Clinic, in downtown St. Moritz—or worse. About one in fourteen rides ends in a fall, and there have been several fatal accidents on the Cresta.

Not far above Battledore, the run goes under Nani's Bridge. The Nanis are one of nine families through whose land the Cresta makes its way. The St. Moritz Tobogganing Club has letters of intent from these landowners expressing their commitment to the future of the run at its present site. For the Nani family, this means part of their front yard, since their stucco chalet is within shuttlecock range of the ice itself. The fact that the landowners—and, indeed, the community of St. Moritz, which donated a hundred and fifty thousand Swiss francs to the club on the occasion of the run's centenary, in 1985—support what is basically a private sporting club reflects that enlightened self-interest for which the Swiss are justly celebrated. The presence of the Cresta run in St. Moritz has provided millions of Swiss francs' worth of publicity for the entire area, and no brochure about St. Moritz fails to mention it.

Above Nani's Bridge, the run is concealed from view by a series of burlap sunscreens. This part of the run—at least, above a curve named Rise—is quite straight, and here the better riders adopt what is known variously as the Canerazzo or kamikaze position. According to "Hints to Riders on the Cresta"—an invaluable little red cardboard-bound booklet first published in 1933 and now in its fifth edition—Canerazzo was "a famous Italian free-fall delayed-drop parachute jumper, who, when jumping, adopted a similar position." (The use of the word "kamikaze" requires no explanation.) The booklet points out that this position was invented in the autumn of 1969, when the noted Swiss Cresta rider Bruno Bischofberger decided to take up the problem of air resistance with a team of tech-

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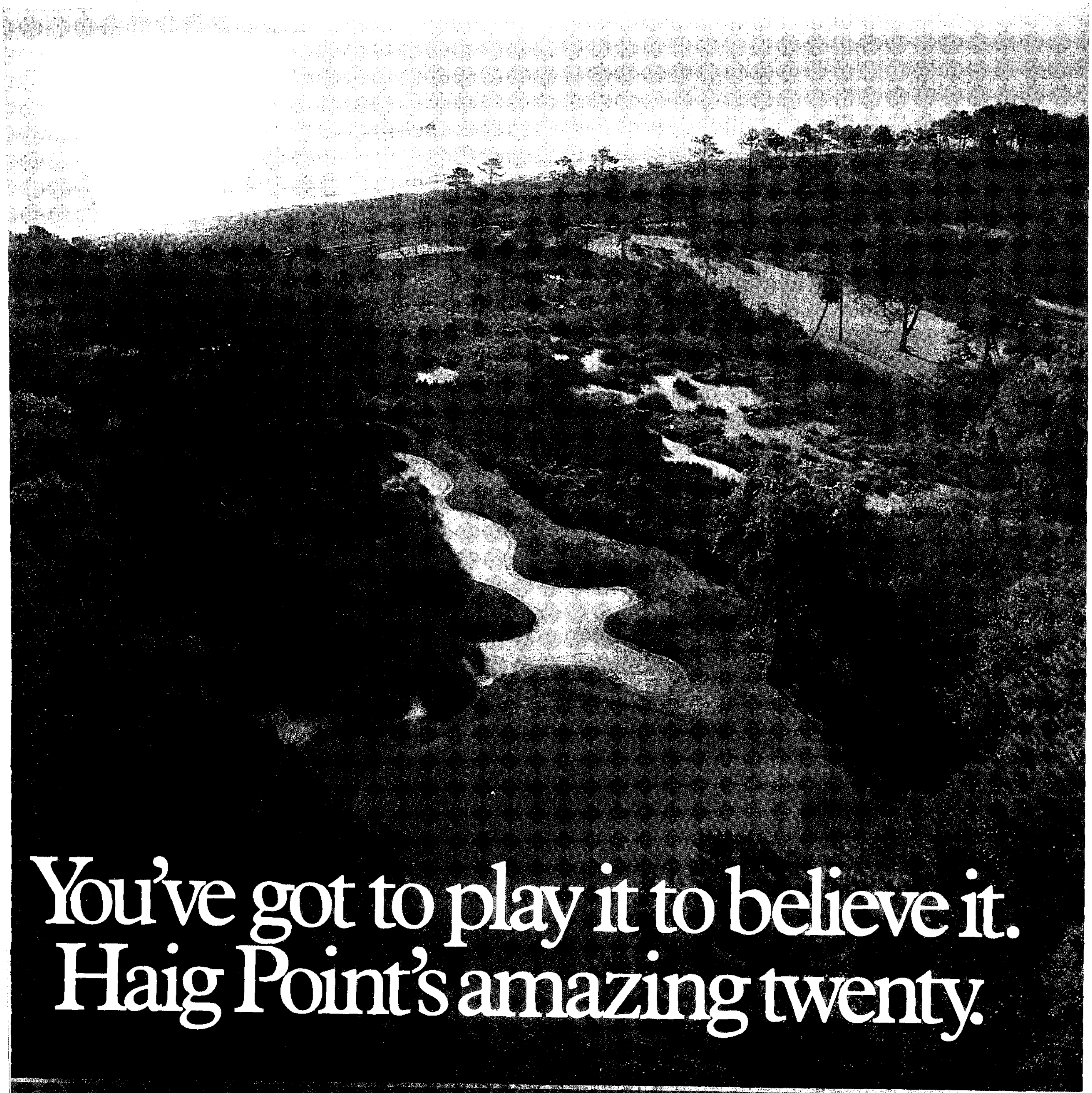
nical experts from the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, in Zurich, Einstein's alma mater. Bischofberger and his skeleton were put in various positions in a wind tunnel under the supervision of two physicists, and studied intently. In the words of the booklet: "The tests showed that the ideal position on a skeleton was the 'full forward' one, with the whole body, including the head and chest, held rigidly in one straight line, parallel to the skeleton and the ice on the run. The accepted position of the rider's elbows, however, was wrong, causing air turbulence and offering great wind resistance, thereby considerably slowing down the pace. The answer to this was to place the arms backwards, parallel to and pressing into the sides of the body, the hands holding on to the back of the seat." The booklet goes on to note that "the rider can easily steer himself by bending his body from the waist up, to the side he wishes to go, and leaning down on the lower banks." In the season of 1969-70, the booklet informs us, Bischofberger tried this position out on the run, with evident success. He improved his times by a few tenths of a second, which, in a sport where a race can be won by a few hundredths of a second, is no mean achievement. The booklet does not discuss how many riders have been sent to Dr. Gut after adopting this position.

THE first place on the chute where a rider can actually put sled to ice is Junction. The skeletons, which are stored in a nearby shed, can be set down on a relatively flat place on the ice and held for the start by one of the crew of workers—there are about a dozen, most of them Italian—who maintain and operate the run. The more intrepid riders take a running start. The interior of the Junction hut looks like a sled parking lot in an Arctic shopping mall. There are about three hundred and fifty so-called active members of the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club and about the same number of members in other categories, and most of them ride the skeletons stored in the shed. Many of the members own their own skeletons, the best of which cost upward of two thousand dollars. A member can rent a club skeleton for the season at a cost of three hundred Swiss francs—about two hundred and fifteen dollars at the current exchange rate. The annual dues for the club are at present a hundred and fifty Swiss francs. But the real cost of the sport is the fee that the club charges its members for each ride: twenty-one francs, with an additional eight-franc charge for having a skeleton brought back up the hill by truck. (In the early days, the skeletons were carried back up on the shoulders of what are described in one history of the course as "sturdy Swiss giants;" three trips for five francs.) Since a determined rider can get in five or six rides in a morning, the fees can mount up rapidly. Non-members enroll on what is known as the supplementary list. There is an initial charge of four hundred francs, which entitles the rider to five rides and five hauls back up. Thereafter, he must pay thirty francs for each ride and the eight-franc hauling fee. (A supplementary-list rider is also given, for his four hundred francs, a fifteen-franc allowance to be spent at the Sunny Bar of the Kulm Hotel, not far from Junction, where Cresta riders have been having lunch for over a century.)

The summit of the run is not Junction but Top, which, in altitude, is a hundred and eighty-two feet above it. From Top to Finish the run drops five hundred and fourteen feet in altitude—about half an Empire State Building. The riders have made a narrow snow path from Junction to Top. Only the very best riders in the club are allowed to start from Top, and since they tend to wear bright-colored rubberized one-piece bobsledding outfits and (like every Cresta rider) motorcycle helmets, they resemble, as they wend their way in the early morning from Junction to Top, a parade of snowbound Martians. At Top, there is a pavilion—a small wooden structure that dates from 1894. The atmosphere in the pavilion—and at Top in general—is pretty grim. From Top, a rider can see almost nothing of the course, which drops off abruptly a hundred and ninety yards down, at a point named Church Leap. By the time a Top rider reaches Junction, he is doing at least sixty miles an hour. The present record for the three-quarters of a mile from Top to Finish, which was set last year by the current champion rider of the club, Franco Gansser, is 50.91 seconds.

Near the Junction hut, there is a wooden bridge that traverses the run. On the other side is the splendid Tobogganing Club clubhouse, which opened on January 12, 1963. It is a flat-roofed white stucco building with banks of windows on three sides; its walls are slightly curved at the corners, and the whole effect is something like the bridge of a passenger liner. "CRESTA RUN" is painted on the front wall in large maroon letters. There are essentially three floors, on the first of which is the men's changing room. (For reasons I will go into shortly, there is no changing room for women.) The men's changing room, whose atmosphere is only slightly less gloomy than that of the pavilion at Top, is the domain of Edi Bibbia. Bibbia is a celebrated name in sledding. Edi's cousin Nino, who was born near Tirano, Italy, and is now the owner of a greengrocery in downtown St. Moritz, was one of the greatest Cresta riders of all time. Even at his present age of sixty-six he is a formidable racer. In 1948, the Winter Olympics were held in St. Moritz, and the Cresta run was an official Olympic event. It consisted of three runs from Top and three runs from Junction, with the lowest total time determining the winner, and Nino Bibbia, representing Italy, won it. He has won so many club races that it is almost impossible to count them. In particular, he won the Buttons three times. The Buttons is a race that was established in 1964 by the German industrialist and sportsman Gunter Sachs, the most recent husband of Brigitte Bardot. While they were still married, she used to present to the top finishers a set of 24k.-gold blazer buttons from Cartier, embossed with a skeleton and rider, along with a kiss. This year Sachs' current wife, another stunning blonde, did the same, and her husband gave a short speech in his heavily accented English. This was followed by a spirited rendition of the "Firework." The Firework dates from the nineteen-thirties and was the invention o an émigré White Russian name Sergei Ovsievsky, who was an enthusiastic Cresta rider. Finding himsel bored at a dance at St. Moritz's Palac Hotel, and thinking how nice it woul be to set off some fireworks to live things up, he proceeded to do just tha —at least, vocally. Ovsievsky composed a cheer that went "Boom ssscchh, pphh-e-e-e-w, boom aaahhh!" and this became the officia Cresta Firework. When it wa demonstrated at this year's awardin of the Buttons, which took place o the terrace in front of the Sunny Ba the entire ensemble of about a hundre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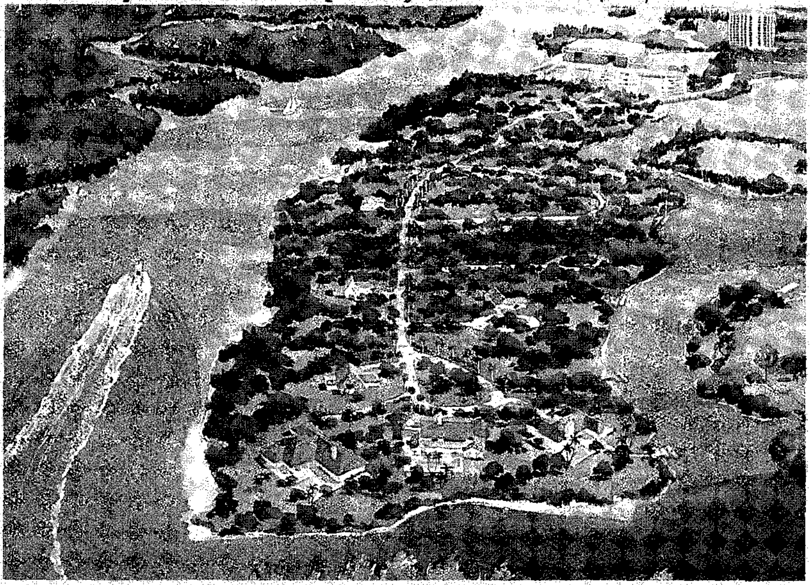

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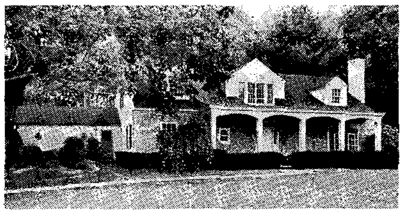

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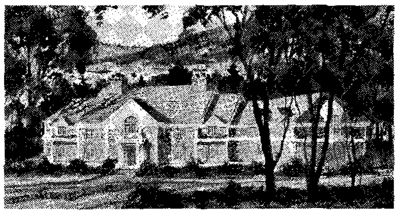

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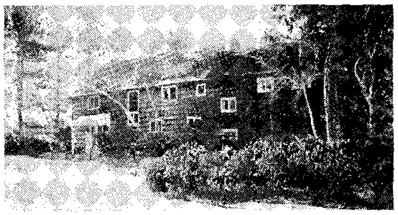

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riders and their guests participated. After the first "boom," everyone waited for the echo from across the valley before getting on with the "ssscchh."

But to return to Edi Bibbia: he presides over the very complex gear that a Cresta rider wears for the run. There are the shoes, with the various sizes of rakes and runners. There are leather kneepads, worn outside one's pants. There are leather elbow pads, worn outside one's sweater, or jacket, or rubber suit. There are stout metal gauntlets, worn over one's gloves to prevent what is known as "Cresta hand," a condition caused by scraping ne's knuckles on the ice on the side of he run when one is going sixty or eventy miles an hour. Despite the auntlets, nearly every rider I spoke to ad some form of Cresta hand. Then, here is the helmet. It is almost beyond elief that in the early days the Cresta iders wore woollen caps and then, ntil the mid-fifties, padded leather elmets, and survived. The present eadgear is plastic motorcycle helmets vith chin guards and, in some cases, lastic visors. Helmets are taken very eriously. Edi Bibbia makes sure that very rider is properly outfitted, and ffers helpful advice in a number of anguages.

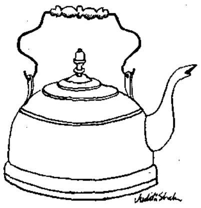
Once outfitted, many riders go uptairs to the clubroom to wait their urn at the run. The clubroom is furished with comfortable chairs and lirary tables, of the type found in Britsh clubs; there is a full bar, and—ather incongruously—a souvenir tand, which sells such items as resta-run postcards, scarves, and ideotapes of a documentary made to elebrate the run's centenary. The indows afford an excellent view of e course, but an even better view can e had by going up one flight and erching on the railing of the roof rrace.

The best view of all is obtained om the tower, which overlooks the of terrace. The tower, built with an verhanging glassed-in booth like the ntrol tower of a small airport, is the erve center of the entire operation. It presided over, very firmly, by the ub secretary, whose power over the ders is absolute. The secretary dedes who will ride and when, and sciplines people who try to violate e rules. This is no small matter, cause people can easily get in over eir heads on the run and be seriously jured. Many of the secretaries have en former British military officers. The present one is Lieutenant-Colonel Digby Willoughby, M.C., and his predecessor was Air Vice-Marshal R. A. Ramsay Rae, C.B., O.B.E. At 8 A.M., Willoughby begins summoning riders to the "box"—the Junction or Top starting position—over a loudspeaker system. When a rider is in position, the Colonel, as he is known, gives a tug on a bell rope. After the bell rings, the rider can start. The Colonel then follows each ride for as much of the course as is visible from the tower—a view that includes Shuttlecock. If a rider has a fall, Willoughby rings his bell several times. Riders have been instructed that if they fall in sight of the tower they are to stand up—if they are able—and wave both hands. Willoughby then announces that the rider is up and "apparently unharmed." Once the rider is, say, out of the straw at Shuttlecock, Willoughby says, "The run is clear, and the straw is clear," and sends the next rider on his way. If a skeleton has become separated from its rider, Willoughby says, "*Achtung! Schlitten!*"—the Swiss-German word for a small toboggan—which echoes over the loudspeakers from Top to Finish. Willoughby waits until the errant skeleton has been recovered before sending the next rider down. He publicly compliments a rider with a "Well done" when he thinks it has been earned, and makes very sardonic remarks if he does not like the way someone has executed a given maneuver. For example, Prince F. J. Wenzel von Liechtenstein was favored with "A most awful Shipton-Stoker by Wenzel. I hope you will be comfortable tonight." If a rider does something that is really unsafe, the Colonel's voice rises, and, in a tone that must have frozen the marrow in the bones of the Gurkhas he used to command, he summons the offender to the tower and gives him a dressing down the like of which the fellow has probably not had since childhood, if ever.

The Colonel has three assistants in the tower, whose principal job it is to record the time of each ride; these times are fed into a computer and then printed out, so that each afternoon, in most of the hotels in St. Moritz, a sheet is posted giving all the riders' names, nationalities, and times. The senior assistant in the tower is Captain Garry M. Daintry, of the Irish Guards. It is because of Daintry that I have whatever knowledge of the Cresta and the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club I do. We met last spring, on a motor tour through the backcountry of Tibet. Daintry, a former helicopter

The Angel of Business

pilot in the British Army, used to ferry Gurkhas into and out of battle in Borneo, where they were engaged in counterterrorist activities. In these circumstances, he met the Colonel, who had been a Cresta rider since the nineteen-fifties. The Colonel became club secretary in 1978, by which time Daintry was out of the Army and was earning his living by doing free-lance helicopter piloting in places like Sri Lanka and the Persian Gulf. In 1984, the Colonel proposed that he come to St. Moritz and act as his adjutant.



I was much taken by Daintry's description of the ice chute, and—at least, in my imagination—I began formulating a plan to go down it myself. Daintry had explained to me the concept of raking. I envisioned this to be something like doing the snowplow in skiing. I told him that my notion would be to rake all the way to the bottom. He said that when he first did the run that had been his idea, too, but after Shuttlecock his legs had given out and he had simply lifted them and let the skeleton take off. He further explained that if I did succeed in raking all the way to the bottom—something, it seems, that was done by Errol Flynn in his only ride on the Cresta, in which he took four minutes to get to Finish—I would be exposed to some nasty remark from the Colonel. Moreover, Daintry said, if I took the final hill up to Finish too slowly my skeleton would not get to the top, and I would have to have it dragged up by a workman, who would attach a large meat hook to it for this purpose.

AFTER our sojourn in Tibet, Daintry and I began a correspondence about the Cresta and my prospects for going down it. For a while, the issue seemed academic, since the Alps were experiencing a heat wave. Ski instructors were teaching tennis and taking people on nature walks, and the Cresta's season was threatened by the tropical thaw. (As things turned out, the run opened a week late.) I decided in the meantime to study the history of the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club. One of the best sources is "The Cresta Run," by Michael Seth-Smith, published in 1976. When it comes to tobogganing, it would appear that St. Moritz was almost a parvenu. Tobogganing for sport in the Alps was first done in the early eighteen-eighties, in Davos, which by crow is about twenty miles north of St. Moritz. In the eighteen-sixties, a German émigré, Dr. Alexander Spengler, had noted that Davos seemed to be free of tuberculosis, and he thought that this might have to do with the alpine air. He published his theory in a pamphlet in 1869, and soon Davos became a sort of luxury sanatorium for diseases of the lungs. People spent the winter there, and tobogganing, which could be done while seated, was thought to be an ideal activity for invalids. The alpine toboggans—the *Schlitten*—were not of the familiar flat sort that were first used by North American Indians (the word "toboggan" is of Algonquian origin) to haul their possessions across the winter snows. They were smaller—sleds, really—with curved wooden runners, which were sometimes reinforced with strips of metal. (*Schlitten* had long been in use in the mountain villages of Switzerland during the winter, in place of carts and wheelbarrows.) Pretty soon, to liven things up, teams from different hotels began racing each other, either on specially built—usually straight—snow slides or down the post road to Klosters. In 1883, the Davos Tobogganing Club was founded, and it sponsored the races. Meanwhile, some twenty years earlier, people had started to go to St. Moritz in the winter, too. In his book Mr. Seth-Smith describes how this apparently came about. In 1864, Johannes Badrutt, who had established the Kulm as the premier summer hotel in St. Moritz, proposed to four English guests that they visit it in the winter, telling them that winter in the Engadine was so clement and sunny that they would need neither hats nor coats. He offered them free room and board at the Kulm for the entire winter if they would only come to try it out—a proposition that, considering the present price of accommodations at the Kulm or any other luxury hotel in St. Moritz, is enough to bring tears to one's eyes. The English travellers took up Badrutt's offer, and when they appeared at his hotel they found him standing at the entrance hatless and coatless.

By 1884, inspired by the success of tobogganing competitions at Davos, the Kulm's clientele decided that St. Moritz had to have the sport as well. The problem was that there was no equivalent of the Davos-Klosters post road, so a banked track with several artificial curves was designed by a young Swiss geometer named Peter Bonorand. A steep gully—the site of the present run—was located, and the laying out of the track began. It soon became clear that the runners of a toboggan taking curves would cut the snow to pieces, and someone had the idea of icing the run. The course was named Cresta after a hamlet close to what was then the bottom of the run. Then, as now, the course was constructed out of whole cloth, or whole snow. A visitor to the run in the summer sees no trace of it except the gully, the clubhouse, the Junction hut, the bridges, and the Top pavilion. (Indeed, after the last day of the season, parts of the run are bulldozed to make it unusable by children and others who might be tempted to try it out and hurt themselves.) The banks are made by piling up snow that is trucked to the site, if necessary. The whole thing is then watered down to produce the ice, and each day the track is rewatered to make sure that the smooth surface is preserved.

On February 18, 1885, a challenge race was run between the sledders of Davos and a team from the Kulm Hotel on the newly created ice chute. The Davos team won, because—as a contemporary account put it—they were "cautious." The racers from St. Moritz tried to go for broke and frequently fell out of the run. In 1887, the St. Moritz Tobogganing Club was founded, and by 1896 winter sports were so popular in St. Moritz that when the Hôtel Bavier du Belvedere opened that season for the first time it issued a brochure stating, "Cases of chest diseases *not* accepted." That was also the year that the famous Palace Hotel opened. In his book Mr. Seth-Smith recounts the return to St. Moritz in 1973 of a Mrs. Lonsdale, the daughter of Major Bulpett, who had been one of the founders of the club As a guest of the club, she was asked whether she wished to stay at the Kulm or the Palace. She replied, Mr Seth-Smith reports, "I must stay a the Kulm. After all, the Palace is such a new hotel." It turned out tha she had not visited St. Moritz since 1899.

Mr. Seth-Smith does not mention whether or not Mrs. Lonsdale had ever tried the Cresta, but in the early days women were regular participant in all the club events, including th races. At the 1950 gathering of th Shuttlecock Club, a poem was read about the legendary Hesta, who actually rode the run three years before it was built:

> Now Hesta rode the Cresta
> Midst the snows of '82,
> Tho' her mother had impressed her
> It was *not* the thing to do.
> She said "It's nice,
> I like the ice,
> It thrills me thru' and thru'."
>
> In defiance of her mummy
> She slid upon her tummy.

Like some of her real-life counterparts, Hesta went out at Shuttlecock and ended up in the hospital. (It is not recorded in the poem whether it was *chez* Dr. Gut.) Hesta wore a "woolly sweater" ("So everyone felt better/When she bought a woolly sweater"), but her real-life counterparts were in a quandary about what to wear. One of them noted, "What is so fantastic is to remember that in those ays trousers for women had not arrived, and that all these sports (very ast and some of them highly dangerous) were accomplished in skirts. We ad a circle of wide elastic which was lipped round the thighs just above the knees to hold the skirt from flapping bout. My . . . sister occasionally wore iding breeches, but this was frowned n as looking very 'fast.' " Nonetheess, women like Mrs. J. M. Baguley nd Vivien Wrangham, who were riding the course in the twenties, did so o a very high standard. The time ecord from Junction for women was et by Mrs. Baguley on February 14, 921. It was 48.9 seconds, which ould have been fast enough to put er in the top ten in the 1948 Olymics. However, by 1929 several women ad taken bad falls on the run, and a reliminary decision was made to ban hem from it. This was affirmed in an motional debate in 1933, in which the emarkable argument was made—and arried the day—that Cresta riding ould contribute to a woman's susceptiility to breast cancer. From that time the present, women associates of e club can ride the Cresta only n the last day of the season, when e course is open to them from Junction. It is claimed that some women ave gone down the run on the ocsion of the annual Ghost Riders ce. This extraordinary event takes lace at night, when the whole course illuminated by flaming torches. It an eerie sight—dark enough to nceal a woman, and just light ough for a rider to see the course. he last rider carries a charge of eworks—real ones—which he, or possibly she, sets off at the start of the run.

DAINTRY finally wrote me that the thaw was over and the course was open, but that January was "bloody cold" and that the best time to appear in St. Moritz would be February. Since February is high season, all the hotels—including the Kulm, where I wanted to stay for the sake of tradition—were fully booked. Finally, I managed to arrange something at the Carlton, which, like the Kulm, is within a few minutes' walk of the Cresta.

By the time I arrived in the Carlton's lobby, I had spent a night on a plane from New York and nearly five hours on the train from Zurich to St. Moritz, and I was feeling in that state of limbo which only jet lag can produce. Added to this was the growing realization that I was no longer simply discussing a run down the St. Moritz ice chute but was now ten minutes away from it by foot. My state of mind can be inferred from the fact that for the first time in my life I had taken out travel insurance—a ninety-five-dollar policy that (I noticed later) contained a clause specifically exempting "dangerous sports" from the coverage. I had told several people that I intended to spend a couple of days checking out the chute, and that if I didn't like the look of it I wouldn't go down it.

As soon as I had settled into my hotel room, I called Daintry. After a few polite preliminaries, he said cheerfully, "Oh, by the way, I have arranged a gentle dart down the chute for you tomorrow morning. Not to worry, old Trevor will look after you. I'll be over in an hour to explain about your kit." I caught a quick and uneasy nap, and within the hour Daintry appeared. "Trevor Baines is your instructor," he explained, in answer to my first query. "He will get you down." For a moment, I felt a great sense of relief, thinking that beginners might get their first ride on a two-man skeleton, with the instructor steering. In all my reading, I had never come across any mention of a two-man skeleton, nor did I see exactly how such a thing would work (would one man steer and the other rake?), but a drowning man will grasp at anything. After a while, it was made clear to me by Daintry that all Baines was going to do was explain to me how to go down the chute; apparently, he hardly ever went down it himself. Daintry handed me several documents, includ-

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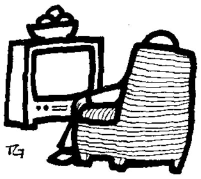
ing the aforementioned "Hints to Riders on the Cresta" and a list of suggestions of what to wear. "Stout pants" were mentioned on the list. I told Daintry that I had brought along a pair of ski pants and asked if that was all right. He replied that people go down the chute in almost anything from bluejeans to rubberized suits, with British riders favoring plus fours. Warm gloves and a warm sweater were essential. The list also mentioned a visor, but Daintry said it would be quite all right to go down in my regular glasses, since it was not expected to snow. My kit having been settled, Daintry laid out the timetable for the following morning. I was to appear at the men's changing room in the clubhouse no later than seven-fifteen, where Edi Bibbia would fit me out with kneepads, elbow pads, rakes, and a helmet. Once that was done and I had filled out a card with my address, etc., I would go to the tower and hand over four hundred Swiss francs, which would make me an official supplementary-list rider. I would then meet Trevor Baines, who would be with all the beginners—there were to be four of us—during Colonel Willoughby's orientation lecture, which was to begin at seven-fifty sharp and last for precisely ten minutes. The supplementary-list riders would have exactly the hour from eight to nine to do their rides, because at nine the members were going to begin their runs in the Cartier Challenge Trophy race. (Various Cartiers have been active Cresta riders.) With that, Daintry departed, leaving me to get through what was night in my new time zone.



The first thing I did was to begin studying the little red book, starting with page 4—"Hints to Beginners on the Cresta Run":

> 1. Note Well:
>
> (a) The "Cresta" is not a "*Slide.*" It is a "Run" and wants "*Riding.*"
>
> (b) A curling stone will not go to the bottom by itself, nor will you, if you don't do something on the way.
>
> (c) The "Cresta" must be treated with respect, or it will get back on you in the long run.
>
> (d) One good demonstration is worth more than the study of this booklet.

No doubt, but how was I to have "one good demonstration" between now and 8 A.M.?

I skipped the next paragraph, which dealt with one's kit—a subject I felt I had mastered. Paragraph 3 I began to commit to memory: "A complete beginner on the Cresta should start from 'Junction,' under the supervision and advice of an experienced rider. [Old Trevor.] The skeleton is placed on the ice with the seat all the way back. The Starter, at the contact, will place his foot in front of the skeleton to prevent it from sliding down the Run. [Very sensible.] Lie on the seat of the skeleton, being sure that the middle of the thighs rest on the very back end of the sliding seat. [O.K.] Grasp the two front bars of the skeleton firmly with both hands. [Is "firmly" an example of British understatement? A viselike grip is more what I had in mind.] Keep your elbows in, and spread your feet some 2½ ft apart, with the toes pointing downwards. [You bet.] At the signal, the Starter will remove his foot, and you will be on your way. The first three or four runs [Three or four runs! You must be joking!] are intended for you to learn your way on the Run and get acquainted with the feel of the ice. Rake hard and evenly with the toes of both feet all the way down the Run, until you come to a standstill after the 'Finish.' [O.K.] Do not attempt to lift your feet, as you shall be surprised by the sudden acceleration. [Oh God! But Daintry said that on his first run he had to lift his feet, because they were giving out. I must ask old Trevor about this.] You may find yourself going from side to side; this is caused by raking harder with one foot than with the other. After several slow runs [What might "slow" mean in this context?] and you have gained more confidence, you can try: 4. The Running Start."

At this juncture, I stopped reading and tried to fall asleep, without much success. At some point during the night, I found a wonderful little passage in the book, which I recited to myself like a mantra. "Do not frighten yourself. *No one minds how slow you go, nor do you harm the Run by raking.*" By five-thirty, when, on my instructions, the hotel desk woke me, I was addressing myself in the first person plural, as in "We are now going to shave"—something I tend to do when I am badly frightened. By six-thirty, we had got our kit together and were walking up from the hotel, past a skating rink and down an icy path to the dimly illuminated clubhouse. For the first time, I saw the run itself. The ice, rather flat here at Junction, had, in the early-morning light, the eerie glint of sharks' teeth.

By contrast, the changing room was warm and fairly comfortable. Two of the other beginners were young Englishmen, and the third was a young Italian who worked in one of the hotels. The Englishmen were accompanied by a friend who had clearly been down the run several times; he was talking knowingly about raking until Shuttlecock and then letting go. Edi Bibbia, a short, bald man, spoke English with an indeterminate European accent. He had a kindly air. He gave me some battered leather kneepads and elbow pads and a brace of ancient metal hand guards. He asked my shoe size, and produced a pair of well-worn club shoes with large, rusted rakes. I asked him if the rakes were good and sharp, and he said they were. He then fitted me for a helmet. I had trouble getting the helmet over my glasses but finally found a way of putting both on at once. Old Trevor joined us—one of those quaint, yellow-bearded Englishmen who look a little like muskrats. He had a cigarette in his mouth. Later, when I had a chance to talk to him, he told me he had been a pilot in the R.A.F. for eight years, had taught flying and a variety of other sports, and liked teaching skeleton riding because he did not have to actually participate in the activity with his pupils. He marched us up to the tower, where we each paid our four hundred francs. We were then escorted back to the changing room to await the Colonel's lecture.

Apart from war movies I had never witnessed what might be called a combat briefing until this moment. With or without a uniform, Colonel Willoughby was every inch an officer, from the erect military bearing to the flashing blue eyes. And we were recruits, notwithstanding our having just paid almost three hundred dollars apiece for the privilege. Willoughby started off by inspecting our shoelaces to make sure there were no loose ends He then asked us if we were wearing rings or watches, pointing out that i someone had an accident and had to be taken to Dr. Gut's clinic his ring might have to be cut off his finger. He told us that when we heard our name called at the starter's box we were to raise one hand. Anyone who failed to do this would lose his turn on the run He explained what we were to do if w came out at Shuttlecock: "If you ar unconscious, there is nothing for yo to do. You will be taken to Dr. Gut's

If you are conscious, you are to stand up and raise both arms over your head so I can see you from the tower." We were each then asked to demonstrate this gesture. Finally, he said that at Finish we must dig in our rakes and lie there until someone came to get us. "Do you know why I want you to do that?" he asked, his voice rising in an alarming crescendo. I tried desperately to think of the correct answer. "Because," the Colonel said, at the top of his lungs, "YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE YOUR TOBOGGANS!!!!!" With that, we were dismissed.

Old Trevor led us across the little bridge and up to the Junction starter's box. No one said a word. Some order of riding had been determined by the Colonel, and I was second. I listened while Baines told the first initiate what to do. "Do not dig in your rakes before you go under the bridge," he said, "because if you do, you won't get anywhere. Then dig your rakes in until you get around Shuttlecock, and hen try to lift them up again." I ecalled the sacred phrase in the sacred booklet: "*No one minds how slow you go, nor do you harm the Run by rak- ng.*" If I have to, I thought, I will ake every inch of the way. The first man was off, and disappeared under he bridge. I then heard "Bernstein to he box." Baines put me on my skeleton in the right position and made sure hat I knew how wide apart my feet hould be while raking and that I was olding on with my elbows in. The Colonel rang his bell, and the starter fted his foot. The skeleton began to lide down the ice. I could see the ridge coming, and when I passed it I ug in my rakes. The skeleton began o lurch to one side. I spread my legs ut wider and dug in again. The skel- ton continued to accelerate. A reali- ation hit me. *Nothing was going to op it from accelerating.* I could rake om here to kingdom come, but the ed was going to keep on accelerating. ly next thought was "I must not nic!" Whatever else, I was now at ast addressing myself in the first person singular. By this time, the skeleton ad entered a deep cavern, which must ave been Battledore. Things were oing by so fast that it did not occur to e to say, "If that is Battledore, the next curve must be Shuttlecock." All I as aware of was another deep cavern nd then a straightaway. To this day, have no idea whether I was raking not. I had never had such a vivid nsation of speed. In its infancy, a resta skeleton was the fastest vehicle

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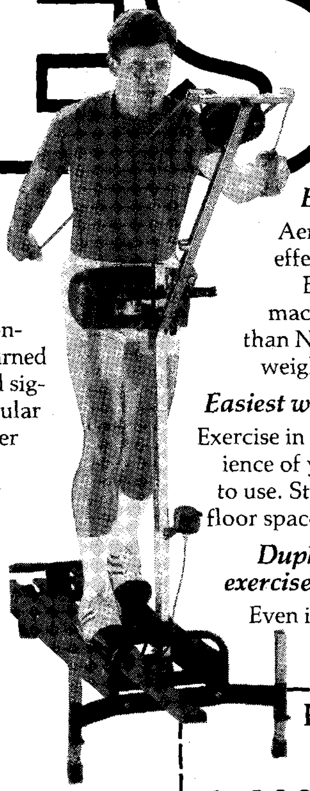

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on earth, and a Cresta rider, with his face four inches above the ice, was breaking speed records every day. The human mind—at least, mine—has not evolved enough to deal with this kind of speed. I was just self-possessed enough to be conscious of the skeleton's veering toward one ice bank and then another. By the topology of the course, I thought that I must have passed under the railroad bridge, but I would not have been aware if the train to Chur had been—as well it might have—chugging over my head. I saw two red flags and had no idea what to make of them. I wondered if perhaps they were indicating that I was going the wrong way down the run. The next thing I knew, the skeleton had come to a stop. I dug in my rakes, not quite comprehending what had happened. I saw a workman coming toward me, and I said to him, "*Fertig?*" ("Finished?") "*Ja,*" he said, "*fertig,*" and he attached a hook to the skeleton. I got off with a tremendous sense of relief, and helped him pull it up to a waiting truck.

That evening, Daintry and I went to have a drink and discuss the events of the day. He had a printout of the day's times. The fastest time from Junction had been turned in by a young local rider named Nico Baracchi—41.61 seconds. (Baracchi, whom I later met, told me that he had been one person shy of going to Calgary to represent Switzerland at the Winter Olympics in the bobsled. He was the fourth-best bobsledder in Switzerland.) This time was .03 seconds slower than his record time of 41.58 seconds from Junction, set in 1986. Prince Wenzel von Liechtenstein's fastest time was 44.12 seconds. My time was 87.06 seconds. I was feeling a little foolish about this until it occurred to me that at some poin Baracchi must have hit over a hundred miles an hour, which meant that I must have been somewhere near fifty. I found this difficult to believe, so I asked Daintry, "Was I going fifty miles an hour on that skeleton?" He gave me a mischievous grin and said "Oh yes, dear boy. At least!"

—Jeremy Bernstein

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UH-HUH DEPARTMENT

[*From the Richmond Times-Dispatch*]

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SHOLEM ALEICHEM'S REVOLUTION

YIDDISH is a direct, spirited, and spiritually alert language that is almost a thousand years old—centuries older than Chaucerian English, but, like the robust speech of Chaucer's pilgrims, expressively rooted in the quotidian lives of ordinary folk. It is hard to be pretentious or elevated in Yiddish, and easy to poke fun. Yid- lish is especially handy for satire, cynicism, familiarity, abuse, sentimentality, and resignation, for a sense of high irony, and for putting people in their place and events in bitter perspective: all the defensive verbal baggage an involuntarily migratory nation is likely o need en route to the next temporary refuge. In its tenderer mien, Yiddish is capable of a touching conversational ntimacy with a consoling and accessible God. If Yiddish lacks cathedral grandeur, there is the compensa- ion of coziness, of smallness, of a ovingly close, empathic, and embrac- ng Creator, who can be appealed to in he diminutive. Yiddish is a household ongue, and God, like other members f the family, is sweetly informal in it.

Starting in the early medieval pe- iod, the Jews of Europe were rarely llowed a chance to feel at home. Consequently, Yiddish developed on he move, evolving out of a fusion of arious tenth-century urban German ialects (not exclusively Middle High German, a linguistic misapprehension hat has been superseded by recent cholarship), and strengthened in its diosyncrasies by contributions from French, Italian, Slavic, Hebrew, and aramaic (the language of the Talmud nd of Jesus). Until the end of the ghteenth century, Yiddish was overwhelmingly the vernacular of Eu- opean Jewish communities from Am- erdam to Smolensk, from the Baltic the Balkans, and as far south Italy. Driven relentlessly eastward the international brutality of the rusaders and by the localized brutali- of periodic pogroms, the language uffered successive uprootings and took new morphological influences. In 492, when Columbus sailed the ocean ue and Ferdinand and Isabella issued eir anti-Jewish edict of expulsion, e language of the Spanish Jews— lled Judezmo or Ladino—began to ndergo upheavals of its own, fleeing e depredations of the Inquisition to olland, Italy, Turkey, and North frica, and even the New World.

And all the while Yiddish remained a language without a name, or almost. "Yiddish" means "Jewish," or what Jews speak, but this term became current only toward the close of the nineteenth century. Previously, the everyday speech of Ashkenazi Jews (that is, Jews without Spanish- or Arabic-language connections) was designated "Judeo-German," which essentially misrepresented it, since it was steadfastly a language in its own right, with its own regionalisms and dialects. To think of Yiddish (as many speakers of German tend to) as merely a fossilized or corrupted old German dialect would oblige us, similarly, to think of French as a deformed and slurred vestige of an outlying Latin patois deposited on the Rhône by a defunct Roman colony. But "Judeo-German" at least implied a modicum of dignity; at any rate, it was a scholar's word. The name that the Jews themselves—intellectuals in particular—habitually clapped on Yiddish was not a name at all. It was, until the miraculous year 1888, a term of opprobrium—*zhargón*. Gibberish; prattle; a subtongue; something less than a respectably cultivated language. Yiddish was "jargon" to the intellectuals despite its then eleven million speakers (before the Nazi decimations), despite the profusion of its press, its theatre, its secular educational systems, and its religious and political movements, and despite its long (though questionable) history of literary productivity.

In 1888—effectively overnight—this contemptuous view of Yiddish was reversed, and by a single powerful pen writing in Yiddish. The pen had a pen name: Sholem Aleichem, a Hebrew salutation that literally means "Peace to you" (the familiar Arabic cognate is "*Salaam aleikum*"), and conveys a vigorously affectionate delight in encountering a friend, or someone who can immediately become a friend, if not a confidant. Almost no phrase is more common in Yiddish—as common as a handshake. The pseudonym itself declared a revolutionary intention: Yiddish as a literary vehicle was at last to be welcomed, respected, celebrated. The name, like the writer, looked to a program, and Sholem Aleichem was already a prolific author of short stories and feuilletons when, in 1888, at the age of twenty-nine, he founded a seminal Yiddish literary annual, *Di Yidishe*

Bernard Schoenbaum

"Would you consider a cameo role?"

Folksbibliotek (*The Popular Jewish Library*). The money ran out in a couple of years, and the new periodical vanished. But the revisionist ardor of its first issue alone—an electrifying burst of promulgation and demonstration—permanently changed the fortunes of Yiddish. The despised *zhargôn* was all at once removed from scorn and placed in a pantheon of high literary art, complete with a tradition, precursors, genres, a sense of historical development, and uncompromising critical goals—a conscious patrimony that, only the day before, no one had dreamed was there.

It had not been there. The aesthetics of literary self-awareness, a preoccupation with generational classifications, issues of precedent and continuity—all these were fictions, deliberate inventions of Sholem Aleichem himself. It was Sholem Aleichem who, invoking Gogol and Turgenev as models, established the genres and identified a radical precursor—the novelist and critic Sholem Yankev Abramovitsh, who used the nom de plume Mendele Moykher-Sforim (Mendele the Book Peddler). In the very hour when Sholem Aleichem was naming him the "grandfather" of Yiddish literature, Mendele was no more than fifty-two years old—in mid-career. Dan Miron, of Columbia, a leading scholar of Yiddish letters (who reveals all these marvels in his enchanting study "A Traveler Disguised"), writes, "What was unimaginable in 1885 was taken for granted in 1895. In 1880 Yiddish writers did not suspect that they had a history; by the early 1890s they already had produced one 'classic' writer; before the century ended *The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century* was written in English for American readers by a Harvard instructor." It was, in short, a process of historical mythmaking so rapid and extreme that the historians themselves swallowed it whole in no time at all. And Sholem Aleichem was the premier mythmaker and founder of that process.

But why was Yiddish so disreputable that it needed a Sholem Aleichem to fabricate a grand intellectual pedigree for it? Like any other language, it did have a genuine history, after all: a living Jewish civilization had eaten, slept, wept, laughed, borne babies, and earned its bread or failed to, and had, in fact, written and read stories in Yiddish for nearly five centuries. Contempt for Yiddish, moreover, was simultaneously internal and external—Gentiles of every class as well as Jewish intellectuals habitually derided it. The Gentile world despised Yiddish as a marginal tongue because it was spoken by a people deemed marginal by Christendom; that was simple enough. And, while it is true that the prejudices of the majority can sometimes manage to leave an unsavory mark on a minority's view of itself, Gentile scorn for Yiddish had almost nothing to do with the contumely that Jewish social and intellectual standards reserved for it. From the Jewish standpoint, the trouble with Yiddish was that it wasn't Hebrew. Yiddish was the language of exile—temporary, make-do. It belonged to an unfortunate phase of history—an ephemeral, if oppressive, nightmare lightened only by the unquenchable hope of national restoration. Yiddish was uncultivated, an empty vessel, useless for significant expression and high experience. It was the instrument of women and the ignorant, categories that frequently overlapped.

Hebrew, by contrast, was regarded as synonymous with Jewish reality. Besides being the language of Scripture, of the liturgy, of daily prayer, it was the sole medium of serious life, which could mean one thing only: serious learning. In a society where fundamental literacy was expected of everyone without exception, including women, and where the scholar was situated at the apex of communal distinction, "ignorant" signified insufficient mastery of Hebrew. Everyone, including women—who could recite from the Hebrew prayer book—had some degree of access to Hebrew. A young boy's basic education began with the Pentateuch; if he never acquired much of anything else, he still had that, along with the daily prayer book, the Passover Haggadah, and a smattering of commentary. And, of course, Yiddish itself, written in the Hebrew alphabet, is peppered with liturgical and Biblical allusions and with homelier matter in Hebrew as well—which is why, though a knowledge of Yiddish may assure an understanding of a sentence in German, the reverse is not so likely. From the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, in the year 70, Hebrew remained a living language, in everyday reading and writing use. It may have suffered severe popular contraction—practically no one *spoke* it—but it never became moribund. My father, for example, wrote a rather formal, Victorian-style English, but when he wanted to address a letter to a person of learning—a rabbi he respected, perhaps, or the headmaster of a yeshiva—he never considered writing in English or Yiddish; in the world he was reared in (he was born in White Russia in 1892), Hebrew was the only appropriate vehicle for a civilized pen. It took—and gave—the measure of a mind. You might tie your shoelaces in Yiddish, but Hebrew was the avenue of thought and, certainly, of civility.

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R. Davidson

When Enlightenment ideas finally spread to the isolated Yiddish-speaking communities of Eastern Europe, arriving a century late, they turned out to have a somewhat different character. Like the Gentile Enlightenment, Haskalah—the name for the Enlightenment movement among Jews—fostered secularization and an optimistic program for the improvement of the common people. At first view, it might seem that Hebrew would have been left behind in the turmoil of the new liberalization, that the language of the Bible would, at the least, attenuate in an atmosphere where the claims o piety were thinning out—just as Latin, after the decline of the authority of Christian scholasticism, wa gradually compelled to give way to a diversity of vernaculars. In Jewish society, exactly the opposite happened the progress of Haskalah only intensified the superior status of Hebrew and accelerated its secular use. As the temporal more and more replaced the theological (though these phrases don' quite fit the way in which Jewish spiritual traditions and this-worldliness ar intertwined), Hebrew pressed mor urgently than ever toward the fore front of intellectual life. Hebrew belles-lettres began to be taken seriously by temperaments that had formerly regarded stories and novels as a species of levity, fit only for women and the ignorant—and therefore written exclusively in Yiddish. The first Hebrew novel—"The Love of Zion," by Abraham Mapu—appeared in 1853 and was followed by wave after explosive wave of literary forms: fiction, essays, poetry. Hebrew composition, which over the last millennium or so had been employed chiefly in scholarly *responsa* on ethical and juridical issues, was suddenly converted into high imaginative art. Not that original Hebrew literature had never before burst out in the European Jewish experience: the majestic poets of medieval Spain had astounded their little historcal span with lyrical masterpieces to vie with the Song of Songs, and the experimental poets of Renaissance Italy had echoed Petrarch and Dante in Hebrew stanzas.

But the influence of Hebrew on nineteenth-century Eastern European ews was so dominant that it was presumed the literary stigma atached to Yiddish would never be ffaced. And at the same time a noisy ush of activism, expressed in cometing currents of cultural and poitical idealism, was beginning to waken a harassed community to he potential of change and renewal. The most ancient of these currents, aithfully reiterated three times a day n the prayer book, refreshed in every eason by religious festivals geared o Biblical agricultural cycles, was the pirit of national return to Jerusaem. Under the influence of Haskalah, he renascence of literary Hebrew nourshed and was nourished by this ireducible grain of religio-national asiration immemorially incorporated in he traditional Jewish sensibility. The more secularized Hebrew became, nd the more dedicated to belles-ettres, the more it found itself, by irtue of *being* Hebrew, harking back o the old emotional sources—somemes even while manifestly repuditing them. The Hebrew belletrists might appear to be focussing on modernist issues of craft and style—articularly at the expense of Yidsh, which the Hebraists declared cked any possibility of style—ut the prestige of Hebrew was also he prestige of national consciousess.

This was the cultural situation into hich Sholem Aleichem thrust his manifesto for the equal status of Yiddish.

HE was born Sholem Rabinovitsh in a town in the Ukraine in 1859—only three years after the abolition of a czarist conscription scheme for the assimilation of Jewish children, whereby boys were seized at age twelve and subjected to thirty-one years of military confinement. He died in New York in 1916—three months after the death of Henry James—having been driven here two years before by the upheavals of war and revolution; but he had fled Russia nearly a decade before that, after living through the ferocious government-sponsored pogroms of 1905. No version or variety of political or social malevolence failed to touch the Jews of Russia, and Sholem Aleichem—whose fame was that of a sprightly comic artist—omitted few of these brutalities from his tales. The comparison with Mark Twain that emerged in Sholem Aleichem's own lifetime was apt: both men kept people laughing even as they probed the darkness—though Sholem Aleichem, for whom cruelty had an explicit habitation and a name, never fell prey to a generalized misanthropy of the "Pudd'nhead Wilson" sort.

As a boy, Sholem Aleichem had Pickwickian propensities, and entertained his family with mimicry and comic skits. His writer's gift, reflecting the normal bilingualism of Jewish life, rapidly turned up in both Yiddish and Hebrew. Soon, though, he acquired a third literary language. After a conventional cheder training (Bible and Talmud in a one-room school), he managed to gain admission to a Russian secondary school; the university education that would ordinarily follow was mainly closed to Jews. But his exposure to Russian studies enabled him to get a job as a Russian tutor in a Russified Jewish family of means—he eventually married his young pupil, Olga Loyev—and emphatically opened Russian to him as a literary instrument. Though his earliest serious literary venture of any kind was a novel in imitation of Mapu, called "The Daughter of Zion" and written in Hebrew, his first published articles appeared in Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish.

When he ultimately settled on Yiddish, he disappointed no one more than his father, a struggling innkeeper who was an enthusiastic disciple of Haskalah and had hoped his son would develop into an exclusively Hebrew

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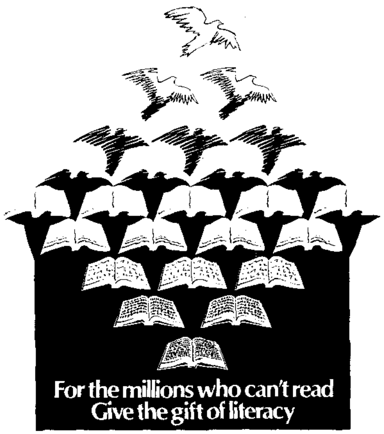

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writer. And, much later, after Sholem Aleichem had become virtually an institution, and was celebrated as the soul of Jewish self-understanding wherever Yiddish was spoken, the language that prevailed as the mother tongue of his household was not Yiddish but Russian; he raised his children in it. If this suggests itself as a paradox, it also reminds us of Isaac Babel, born thirty-five years after Sholem Aleichem, and arrested and silenced by the Soviets in 1939. Babel, too, wrote a handful of stories that might be described as revealing the soul of Jewish self-understanding. (One of them, "Shabos Nahamu," with its Hebrew-Yiddish title, could readily pass for a romping fable of Sholem Aleichem's, except for the Chekhovian cadence of its last syllables.) Whether because he chose to write in Russian, or for some other reason, Babel is not usually counted as a Jewish writer. This leads one to imagine what the consequences might have been if Sholem Aleichem, like Babel, had committed himself wholly to Russian: it is highly probable that Russian literature would have been augmented by still another dazzling writer. What is certain is that there would have been no Sholem Aleichem. To produce a Sholem Aleichem, Yiddish was a sine qua non.

That may appear to be an unremarkable statement. One might just as well say that to produce a Guy de Maupassant, French is a sine qua non, or that to produce a Selma Lagerlöf, Swedish is indispensable. For these writers, though, there was no difference between the legacy of the literary mainstream and the daily language, which seemed no more a matter of choice than breathing; for them, literature was conducted in the vernacular. But Sholem Aleichem was faced with a cultural redundancy—internal bilingualism—known almost nowhere else in Europe (Ireland, with important differences, comes to mind). Yiddish was the common language of breathing, the people's language, and Hebrew was the language of the élitist literary center. In these circumstances, to choose Yiddish—to insist that it be taken seriously—was a mettlesome and revolutionary act.

In a way, a version of this revolution—a revolution in favor of Yiddish—had occurred a century before, with the advent of the Chassidic movement: romantic, populist, anti-establishment, increasingly cultlike in its attachment to charismatic teachers. The Chassidic leaders, resenting the stringently rationalist intellectualism that dominated Jewish communal life, enlisted the Yiddish-speaking masses against the authority of the learned (where "learned" always meant "learned in Hebrew"), and offered instead the lively consolations of an emotional pietism. The movement caught on despite—or maybe because of—the fact that scholarliness was unstintingly prized, far above earning power: a scholar-husband was a great catch, and the bride's father would gladly support him if he could; so, often, would the bride. (My Russian grandmother, for instance, the mother of eight, ran a drygoods shop while my grandfather typically spent all his waking hours in study.) The corollary of this, not unexpectedly, was that simple people deficient in learning were looked down on. At its inception, Chassidism was a popular rebellion against this sort of intellectual élitism; it threw off rigor and lavished dance, song, legend, story, merriment, and mysticism (the last too frequently fading into superstitious practice) on ordinary mortals, whose psalms and prayers were in Hebrew but whose grammar was at best lame.

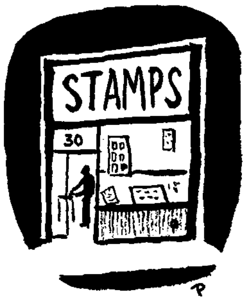
While there lurked in Chassidism a kind of precedent for an unashamed turn to the Yiddish tale—including at least one fabulist of Kafka-like artistry—Sholem Aleichem's revolution had another source. Like the belletristic passions of the Hebraists, it belonged to the Enlightenment. For the Chassidim, stories told in Yiddish were appurtenances of a fervent piety; for Sholem Aleichem, they were vessels of a conscious literary art. What he had in common with the Chassidic impulse was a tenderness toward plain folk and the ambition to address the human heart unassumingly and directly, in its everyday tongue. And he had, through the refinements of Haskalah, all the complexities of high literary seriousness and what we nowadays call the strategies of the text. This combination of irreconcilables—the popular broad leniency of Chassidism and the elevated channelled pointedness of Haskalah—may be what fashioned him into the master of irony we know as Sholem Aleichem.

Of course, we do not really know him—not in English, anyhow. And, with the passing of the decades since the Nazi extirpation of Yiddish-speaking European civilization, fewer and fewer native readers of literary Yiddish are left. For Americans, Sholem Aleichem has always been no more than a rumor, or two or three rumors, all of them misleading. First, there is *the rumor of permanent inaccessibility* because of the "special flavor" of Yiddish itself—its unfamiliar cultural premises and idiomatic uniqueness. But every language is in precisely that sense untranslatable; Robert Frost's mot—poetry is what gets lost in translation—is famous, and the Hebrew poet Bialik compared translation to kissing through a handkerchief. Yiddish is as amenable to translation as any other language—though that may mean, despite certain glorious exceptions, not very. As for the historical and cultural idiosyncrasies inherent in Yiddish, they are not especially difficult or esoteric; for the most part, they require about as much background as, say, managing to figure out what a name day is in Chekhov. Saturated in allusiveness as he is, Sholem Aleichem is a thousand times closer to Dickens and Mark Twain and Will Rogers than he can possibly be to more encumbered figures; he was a popular presence, and stupendously so. His lectures and readings were mobbed; he was a household friend; he was cherished as a family valuable. His fiftieth birthday was a public event, and at his death hundreds of thousands filled the streets as his cortège wound through the Bronx and Harlem, down to the lower East Side and into Brooklyn for the burial.

And still he was not what anothe rumor makes him out to be: simple minded, sentimental, peasantlike, old countryish, naïve, premodern—the occasion of nostalgia for a sweeter time pogroms notwithstanding. It would be easy to blame "Fiddler on the Roof for these distortions, but the Broadwa musical—to which all those adjectives do apply, plus slickness—didn arrive until 1964, and Sholem Aleichem had been misrepresented in this way long, long before. In fact, thes well-established misconceptions may have been the inspiration for the emptied-out, prettified, romantic vulgarization (the Yiddish word for it is *shund*) typified by the musical's book and lyrics: exactly the sort of *shund* that Sholem Aleichem, in seeking new literary standards for Yiddish, had battled against from the start. Whatever the success of "Fiddler on the Roof," its chief nontheatrical accomplishment has been to reduce the reputation of a literary master to the very thing he repudiated.

That the sophisticated chronicler of a society in transition should be misconstrued as a genial rustic is something worse than a literary embarrassment. Dickens is not interchangeable with Sam Weller, or Mark Twain with Aunt Polly, or Sholem Aleichem with Tevye (and even the Tevye we hink we know isn't the Tevye on the tage). This quandary of misperceived eputation may possibly stem from the arbled attitudes of some of the Yidish-speaking immigrants' descenants, who inherited a culture—failed o inherit it, rather—only in its most ebilitated hour, when it was about to ive up the ghost. The process of attenuation through competing influnces had already begun in the Jewish illages of Eastern Europe (and was to ecome Sholem Aleichem's great subect). In the rush to Americanization, he immigrants, zealously setting out o shake off the village ways they had rought with them, ended by encourging amnesia of the central motifs nd texts of their civilization. A certain text orientation remained, to be ure, and their American-born successors would learn to bring it to bear on Whitman and James and Emerson and aulkner, not to mention Bloomsbury; ut the more intrinsic themes of Jewh conceptual life came to be underood only feebly, vestigially, at a time hen they were either substantially luted by the new culture or were sappearing altogether. Among the mmigrants' children and grandchilren, the misshapen shard was mainly ken for the original cup. And generions that in the old country had been vidly and characteristically distinct om the surrounding peasant society ere themselves dismissed as peasants their "modern" offspring—univery-educated, perhaps, but tone-deaf their own history.

Now, toward the end of the twentih century—with a startling abunnce that seems close to mysterious—e are witnessing a conscientious push toward a kind of restitution. There is that which wants us finally to see—to see fairly, accurately, richly—into the substance of Yiddish prose and poetry, even if necessarily through the diminishments of translation. The buzz of anthologists hopeful of gaining attention for Yiddish has always been with us, but a worshipful air of do-goodism, whether hearty or wistful or polemical, has frequently trailed these votary efforts. A serious critical focus was inaugurated more than thirty years ago by Irving Howe and his collaborator, the late Yiddish poet Eliezer Greenberg, with their thick pair of "Treasuries"—collections of Yiddish stories and poems enhanced by first-rate introductions. These were succeeded, in 1972, by the Howe-Greenberg "Voices from the Yiddish," a compilation of literary and historical essays, memoirs, and diaries, and, in 1974, by selections from the tales of I. L. Peretz, one of the three classic writers of the Yiddish narrative (Mendele and Sholem Aleichem are the others). The last two or three years, however, have brought about an eruption—if this word is too strong, "efflorescence" is not nearly strong enough—of dedicated translation: "My Mother's Sabbath Days," a memoir by Chaim Grade, translated by Channa Kleinerman Goldstein and Inna Hecker Grade; the extant parts of "The Family Mashber," an extraordinary work long quiescent in the Soviet Union, by Der Nister (The Hidden One, the pen name of Pinkhas Kahanovitsh, who died in a Soviet prison in 1950), translated by Leonard Wolf; "American Yiddish Poetry," the first of a series of scholarly anthologies projected by Benjamin and Barbara Harshav and designed to support the thesis that poetry written in Yiddish on American soil and expressive of American experience counts significantly as American poetry; the splendid new "Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse," a landmark volume, brilliantly edited and introduced by Irving Howe, Ruth R. Wisse, of McGill University, and Khone Shmeruk, of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; "In the Storm" and "The Nightingale," novels by Sholem Aleichem, lucidly translated by Aliza Shevrin; Richard J. Fein's devoted rendering of the poetry of Jacob Glatstein; and others, doubtless, which have escaped me. One result of all this publishing activity is that Isaac Bashevis Singer, the sole Yiddish-language Nobel winner and the only Yiddish writer familiar in any significant degree to American readers, can finally be seen as one figure among a multitude in a diverse, complex, and turbulent community of letters. Too often, Singer, lacking an appropriate cultural horizon and seemingly without an ancestry, has had the look in English of a hermit of language fallen out of a silent congregation and standing strangely apart. The current stir of industry among translators begins at last to hint at the range and amplitude of modern Yiddish literature.



All these freshly revealed novelists and poets are, in one respect or another, the heirs of Sholem Aleichem, and if there is a single work among those now emerging in English which is the herald and signature of the rest, it is, unsurprisingly, Sholem Aleichem's "Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories" (Schocken, 1987), issued under the auspices of the newly organized Library of Yiddish Classics, of which Professor Wisse is the series editor. The eight Tevye stories are without doubt the nucleus of any understanding of how Yiddish leaped into world literature a hundred years ago (even though world literature may not have taken note of it, then or since). Professor Miron speaks of "the homiletic-sentimental streak" in Yiddish fiction before Mendele and Sholem Aleichem: "definitely anti-artistic, inimical to irony, to conscious structural artistry, to the idea of literary technique, to stylistic perfection, and favorable to moralistic sermonizing, to unbridled emotionalism, and to stylistic sloppiness." Tevye stands for everything antithetical to such a catalogue. What one notices first is not the comedy—because the comedy is what Sholem Aleichem is famous for, the comedy is what is expected—but the shock of darkness. Poverty and persecution: while not even Sholem Aleichem can make these funny, he can satirize their reasons for being, or else he can set against them the standard and example of Tevye (as Mark Twain does with Huck Finn). Tevye is not any sort of scholar—that goes without saying. He is a *milkhiger*, meaning that he owns a cow; "dairyman" is too exalted a word for the

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owner of a cow, a horse, and a wagon. But he is not a fool, he is certainly not a peasant, and he is by no means the malaprop he is reputed to be. Tevye is intelligent; more, he is loving, witty, virtuous, generous, open, unwilling to sacrifice human feeling to grandiose aims—and all without a grain of heroism or sentimentality. His voice is monologic, partly out of deepest intimacy—a sense of tête-à-tête with God or the reader—and partly out of verbal ingenuity, theatricality, even the sweep of aria. Tevye is never optimistic—he is too much at home with the worst that can happen. And he is never wiped out by despair—he is too much at home with Scripture and with the knowledge of frailty, mutability, mortality. When his wife, Golde, dies, he quotes from the morning prayer "What are we and what is our life?" and from Ecclesiastes "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for that is the whole of man."

Tevye's play with sources, Biblical and liturgical, is the enchantment—and brevity—of his wit. (A glossary insures that nearly all of it is gratifyingly at our fingertips.) Though his citations are mostly designed for comical juxtaposition—"And it came to pass," he will chant, with Biblical sonorousness, about an ordinary wagon ride from Yehupetz to Boiberik—occasionally a passage is straightforwardly approached, and then the glancingness of Tevye's brushstroke only abets the resonance of the verse. That sentence from Ecclesiastes, for instance: Tevye doesn't recite it in its entirety. What he actually says is "*ki zeh koyl ha'odom*" ("for that is the whole of man"), and the six scant Hebrew syllables instantly call up, for Tevye and his readers, the full quotation, the tremor of memory aroused by its ancestral uses, the tone and heft of the surrounding passages. Again, it is worth keeping in mind that Tevye is not to be regarded as an educated man: he is a peddler of milk and cheese. And still he has a mastery of a plenitude of texts that enables him to send them aloft like experimental kites, twisting their lines as they sail. By contrast, it would be unimaginable for a rustic in a novel by Thomas Hardy (Sholem Aleichem's contemporary, who outlived him by more than a decade) to have memorized a representative handful of Shakespeare's plays from earliest childhood, and to have the habit of liberally quoting from one or another of these dozens and dozens of times, not only accurately and aptly but stingingly, pointedly, absurdly, and always to an immediate purpose; we would reject such a character as madly idiosyncratic, if not wholly implausible. And yet Tevye is a vivacious, persuasive creature, warm with the blood of reality. In his world, it is not only plausible, it is not unusual, for a milkman or a carpenter to know the Pentateuch and the Psalms inside out, and considerable other scriptural and rabbinic territory as well, and to have mastered the daily and holiday prayer books—no slender volumes, these—backward and forward. Tevye's cosmos is verbal. Biblical phrases are as palpable to him as his old horse When he wants to remark that he has no secrets, he tosses in a fragmen from Genesis: "And the Lord said Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" When his only cow dies, he invokes a Psalm: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: found trouble and sorrow." When his daughter Shprintze is being courted by an unsuitable young man he draws from the Song of Songs: " lily among thorns." Chaffing a utopian socialist, he turns to a rabbinic tractate, "The Ethics of the Fathers," for its illumination of type of artlessness: "What's mine i yours and what's yours is mine." I is all done with feather-light economy he drops in only two or three word of the verse in question—an elegan minimalism—confident that his audience will recognize the source an fill in the rest. Or perhaps sometime not so confident. In a superbly clarifying historical introduction, Hille Halkin, the translator, remarks tha Tevye's quotations, "depending on th situation and the person he is talking to, can serve any conceivable purpose: to impress, to inform, to amuse to intimidate, to comfort, to scold to ridicule, to show off, to avoid, t put down, to stake a claim of equality or create a mood of intimacy. And he is not above "deliberate inventing, confusing, or misattributing a quote," Halkin continues, "i order to mock an ignoramus wh will never know the difference, th scoring a little private triumph which he himself is the sole witness."

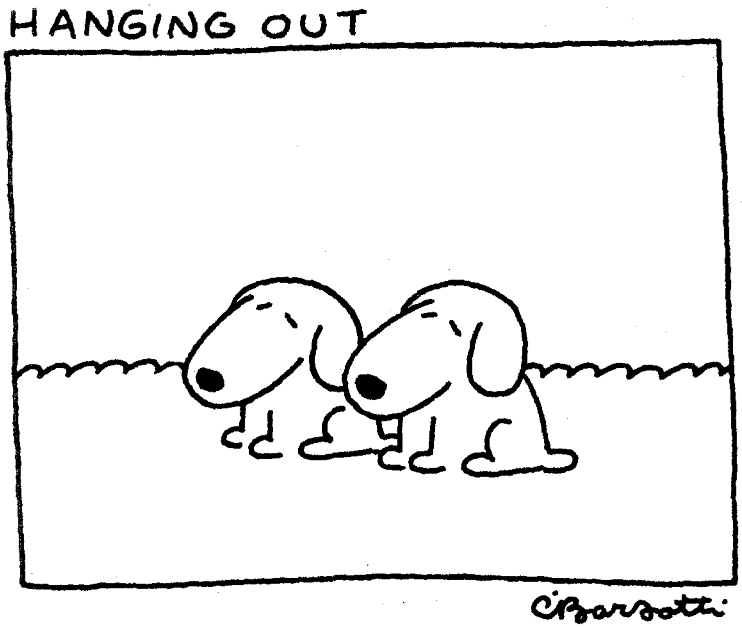
These virtuoso cartings of language—the prestidigitator's flash from Biblical eloquence to its mundane applicability—have a cavorting brilliance reminiscent of the tricks and coruscations of "Finnegans Wake," where sentences are also put under the pressure of multiple reverberations. Or think of Harold Bloom's thesis of "misprision," whereby an influential resource is usurped for purposeful "misinterpretation," engendering new life in a new text. While these macaronic comparisons—Tevye in the company of James Joyce and Harold Bloom—may have the same farcical impact as Tevye's own juxtapositions, they serve the point, which is that Sholem Aleichem's Tevye is about as far from the mind, tone, temperament, and language of either folk art or "Fiddler"-type show biz as Boiberik is from Patagonia. Tevye is the stylistic nvention of a self-conscious verbal artist, and if he stands for, and speaks for, the folk, that is the consequence of he artist's power. Tevye's manner emerges from the wit and genius of Sholem Aleichem.

Tevye's matter, however—his good and bad luck, his daily travail and occasional victory, the events in his amily and in his village and in he next village—belongs unalloyed-y to the folk. What happens to Tevye is what is happening to all Jews in he Russian Pale of Settlement; his ales are as political as they are ndividual, and it is entirely pertinent that Halkin provides a list f government-instigated depredations gainst Russian Jews from 1881 to 904, including numbers of pogroms, lood-libel charges, re-trictions, expulsions, losed towns and cities, pecial taxes, identity asses, quotas, and other ppressive and humiliating measures. Tevye's fe is assaulted by them l (as are the lives of the haracters in "The Railroad Stories").

Tevye starts off, in the rst of the eight tales, ently enough, with a enerous ladling of urlesque. Ten years ago, e recounts in "Tevye rikes It Rich," "I was ch a miserable beggar at rags were too good r me." Unexpectedly, and his nag stumble into an act of slapstick kindness, he is rewarded with a cow, and his career as a *milkhiger* is launched. In the second story, "Tevye Blows a Small Fortune," he is taken in by a con man, a Jew even poorer than he is; when he catches up with the swindler, who by then has lost everything and looks it, Tevye ends by forgiving him and blaming himself. "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," he quotes from Job. But with the third story, "Today's Children," and the remaining five, social and cultural disintegrations begin to rule the narrative. Against the stiff precedents of arranged marriage, Tevye's daughter Tsaytl and a poor young tailor decide to marry for love. Tevye accedes, but he is discontent on three strong counts: custom has been violated and the world turned upside down; Tsaytl has rejected an older widower of some means, a butcher, in whose household there will always be enough to eat; and, foremost, Tevye himself is a textual snob with aristocratic aspirations, who would like to claim a learned son-in-law. Neither the butcher nor the tailor is capable of the nuanced study of "*di kleyne pintelakh*" ("the fine points"). Still, Tevye defends his daughter's autonomy for the sake of her happiness, despite his certainty that she will go hungry. "What do you have against her that you want to marry her?" he teases the young tailor. In "Hodl," a story that extends the theme of social decomposition, Tevye's daughter of that name also makes her own marital choice—a student revolutionary, a socialist intellectual, who is arrested and sent to Siberia. Hodl insists on following him into exile, and when Tevye has driven her in his wagon to the railroad station he closes the tale in sardonic melancholy: "Let's talk about something more cheerful. Have you heard any news of the cholera in Odessa?"

But the truly unthinkable is yet to come: in "Chava," Tevye's most rebellious daughter elopes with Chvedka, an educated Gentile village boy (a social rarity in himself). Tevye is torn by anguish and terror. Not only has Chava cut the thread of religious and historic continuity; she has joined up with the persecutors. The village priest takes charge of her, because, he says, "we Christians have your good in mind," and Tevye responds, "It would have been kinder to poison me or put a bullet in my head. If you're really such a good friend of mine, do me one favor: leave my daughter alone!" In Tevye's universe, the loss of a daughter to Christianity—which for him has never revealed anything but a murderous face—is the ultimate tragedy; he sobs for her as for a kidnapped child. ("Fiddler on the Roof" conspicuously Americanizes these perceptions. When a pogrom is threatened, Chava reappears, with her suitably liberal and pluralist-minded husband, who announces, in solidarity, "We cannot stay among people who can do such things to others," and even throws in a post-Holocaust declaration against Gentile "silence." But Sholem Aleichem's Chava returns "to her father and her God," chastened, remorseful, and without Chvedka.) In "Shprintze," the daughter of the sixth tale—her name, by the way, is more decorous than it sounds, deriving from the Italian *speranza*—is jilted by a well-off young rattlebrain who is fond of horses, and drowns herself. Beilke, the daughter of "Tevye Leaves for the Land of Israel," marries a coarse parvenu who, ashamed of a "cheesemonger" father-in-law, wants to pay Tevye off to get him out of the way, even offering him the fulfillment of a dream—a ticket to Palestine. Shprintze and Beilke are the center of "class" stories: as traditional influences lose their hold, position based on material possessions begins to outweigh the authority of

HANGING OUT

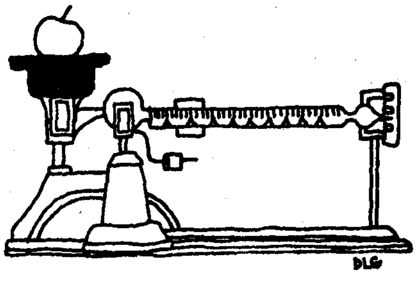


intellectual accomplishment, marking a growing leniency toward Gentile ways (typified by Shprintze's feckless suitor's preoccupation with "horses, fishing, and bicycles"). The aristocracy of learning—the essential principle and pillar of shtetl life—is breaking down; the mores of the outer society are creeping, even streaming, in.

In the final narrative, "Lekh-Lekho" (the opening words of God's command to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy country"), everything has come apart. Tevye's wife, the pragmatic foil for his idealism, is dead. Beilke and her husband have lost their money and are laboring in the sweatshops of America. Tsaytl's husband, the young tailor, is struck down by consumption, and the hope of Palestine vanishes for Tevye as he takes in his impoverished daughter and her children. On top of all this, it is the time of the Beilis blood-libel trial—a Jew accused, as late as 1911, of killing a Christian child for its blood. (This grisly anti-Semitic fantasy turns up as far back as Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale.") Tevye's Gentile neighbors, after a meeting of the village council, are preparing for a pogrom. "Since you Jews have been beaten up everywhere, why let you get away with it here?" argues Ivan Paparilo, the village elder. "We just aren't certain what kind of pogrom to have. Should we just smash your windows, should we tear up your pillows and blankets and scatter all the feathers, or should we also burn down your house and barn with everything in them?" To which Tevye replies, "If that's what you've decided, who am I to object? You must have good reasons for thinking that Tevye deserves to see his life go up in smoke. . . . You do know there's a God above, don't you? Mind you, I'm not talking about my God or your God—I'm talking about the God of us all. . . . It may very well be that He wants you to punish me for being guilty of nothing at all. But the opposite may also be true." Tevye finally manages to talk the villagers out of the pogrom—they want it, they explain, only to save face with the towns that have had one. Instead, all the Jews in the village—among them Tevye's family, including the returned Chava—are expelled by order of the provincial governor; and there the Tevye tales end. "Anyone can be a goy," Tevye concludes, "but a Jew must be born one. . . . It's a lucky thing I was, then, because otherwise how would I ever know what it's like to be homeless and wander all over the world without resting my head on the same pillow two nights running?"

Thus the sombre matter of Sholem Aleichem's comedy. Tevye's dicta run all through it: what he thinks about God ("Why doesn't He do something? Why doesn't He say something?"), about wickedness ("My problem was men. *Why did they have to be so bad* when they could just as well have been good?"), about the goals of life ("to do a little good in His world before you die—to give a bit of money to charity, to take someone needy under your wing, even to sit down with educated Jews and study some Torah"), about the situation in Russia ("pogroms in Kishinev, riots, troubles, the new Constantution [Constitution] . . . God wanted to do us Jews a favor and so He sent us a new catastrophe, a Constantution"), about education ("I'd sooner eat a buttered pig than sit down to a meal with an illiterate. A Jew who can't read a Jewish book is a hundred times worse than a sinner"), about reserve ("Secretive people annoy me"), about opportunity ("A cow can sooner jump over a roof than a Jew get into a Russian university! . . . They guard their schools from us like a bowl of cream from a cat"), about faith and *resignation* ("A Jew has to hope. So what if things couldn't be worse? That's why there are Jews in the world!"), about what to do with money if one ever got any ("Make a contribution to charity that would be the envy of any rich Jew"), about ignorance, love, decency, poverty, misery, anti-Semitism, and the tardiness of the Messiah.

"THE RAILROAD STORIES," the second half of the Halkin volume, are similar in their use of a monologic narrator, and certainly in their cheerless subject matter. The storyteller of "Baranovich Station" sums up what Jews travelling by train—men scrambling for a living—talk about: "From the Revolution we passed to the Constitution, and from the Constitution it was but a short step to the pogroms, the massacres of Jews, the new anti-Semitic legislation, the expulsion from the villages, the mass flight to America, and all the other trials and tribulations that you hear about these fine days: bankruptcies, expropriations, military emergencies, executions, starvation, cholera, Purishkevich . . ." (V. N. Purishkevich was the founder of an anti-Semitic movement called the Black Hundreds.) If we didn't absolutely grasp it before, we can profoundly recognize it now: Sholem Aleichem's is a literature of crisis.



And yet "The Railroad Stories," in their slightness and vitality and scattershot abundance—there are twenty of them—strike with a comic sharpness that to my mind exceeds even the effervescent artistry of the Tevye tales. Tevye's voice is elastic, simultaneously innocent and knowing, never short on acuteness or energy or observation or ironic fervor; but "The Railroad Stories," perhaps because they are largely unfamiliar to us and have never been contaminated by reductiveness, yield the plain shock of their form. Their form is all plotless trajectory: one doesn't apprehend the mark until after the mark has been hit. To come on these stories with no previous inkling of their existence (I imagine this wil be the experience of numbers of readers) is to understand what it is to marvel at form—or formlessness—in the hands of literary genius. There are pronounced resemblances to early Chekhov and to Babel and Gorky, a well as a recognizable source—the ca sual sketch that is the outgrowth o the feuilleton, here strengthened and darkened by denser resonances. Never theless, the landscape is for the mos part uniquely Sholem Aleichem's, Russia not easily duplicated even b the sympathetic Chekhov, who in hi letters could now and then toss off a anti-Semitic crack as lightly as shrug. The most Chekhovian of thes stories, "Eighteen from Pereshche pena"—a vignette of comic misun derstanding that, when untangled is seen to be tragic—appears at first t be about the quota system in schoo but actually turns on the dread o forced military service: the eightee Jewish youths "taken" from the tow of Pereshchepena are revealed to b unlucky conscripts, not lucky student "The Wedding That Came Withou Its Band" lustily caricatures a pogro that doesn't come off: a trainload hooligans "in full battle gear, to with clubs, and tar," get so drunk "the conductor and the stoker ar even the policeman"—that they a left behind by the locomotive intended to carry them to their prey. In "The Miracle of Hoshana Rabbah," a venturesome Jew named Berl and an anti-Semitic priest find themselves, improbably but perilously, alone together aboard a runaway locomotive. The priest, exasperated with Berl, threatens to push him off. "Just look at the difference, Father, between you and me," says Berl as the engine hurtles wildly on. "I'm doing my best to stop this locomotive, because I'm trying to save us both, and all you can think of is throwing me out of it—in other words, of murdering your fellow man!" An antic moral fable, wherein the priest is shamed and tamed. But there are plenty of Jewish rascals, too—con men and cardsharps and thieves, a pimp and a cowardly apostate, and even an insurance arsonist. And there are any number of desolate Jews—a teen-age suicide, a desperate father who pursues a Gentile "professor of medicine" to beg him to tend his dying boy, Jews without residence permits who risk arrest by sneaking into town to see a doctor.

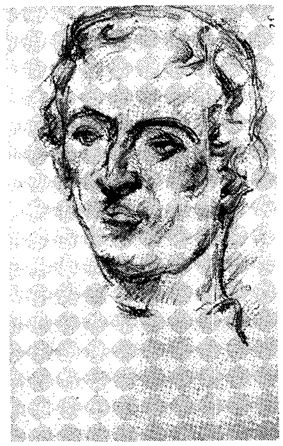
All these characters, whether avoidng or perpetrating pogroms, whether hostile or farcical or pathetic or paradoxical, are flushed with the rosiness of comedy. Comedy, the product of ridicule, is too brittle a mode in the absence of compassion and too soppy a mode in the absence of briskness. Sholem Aleichem is always brisk and always ready to display just enough sparing) kindliness to keep the tone on the far side of soppiness. Here, in "Third Class," he is matter-of-fact without coldness, satiric without meanness, loving without mawkishness:

> When you go third class and wake up in he morning to discover that you've left our tefillin and your prayer shawl at ome, there isn't any cause for alarm—you nly need to ask and you'll be given somene else's, along with whatever else you require. All that's expected of you in reurn, once you're done praying, is to open our suitcase and display your own wares. odka, cake, a hard-boiled egg, a drumick, a piece of fish—it's all grist for the mill. Perhaps you have an apple, an ornge, a piece of strudel? Out with it, no need to be ashamed! Everyone will be glad o share it with you, no one stands on eremony here . . . Before long each of us ot only knows all about the others' troues, he knows about every trial and tribution that ever befell a Jew anywhere. It's nough to warm the cockles of your heart!

The close-knittedness—or hudling, or nestling—of frequently hreatened poor Jews, collectively and individually powerless, who bloom in the fond and comradely safety of fellow-Jews on a train; the caustic notion of adversity as one's oldest intimate; trials and tribulations that nevertheless warm the cockles: all this is Sholem Aleichem defining, so to speak, the connotations of his nom de plume.

That these ironies can rise so pungently from a page in English testifies to how clear and broad an opening the translator has bored into the original, where psychological sighs and skeptical gestures are more slender than a hair, or else are hidden—a grain here, a grain there—in the crannies of language. Halkin, an Israeli born and reared in the United States, is an accomplished translator from Hebrew who is here tackling Yiddish for the first time. His able text empowers the reader to come away confident of having been given a reasonable measure of access. Now and then, he achieves much more than the merely reasonable—a true bridge between languages. Happy moments like this: "Menachem Mendl was his name: a wheeler, a dealer, a schemer, a dreamer, a bag of hot air." Or this: "He called him a scoundrel, a degenerate, a know-nothing, a leech, a bloodsucker, a fiend, a traitor, a disgrace to the Jewish people." Such jubilant and exuberant flights let us know without question that we have been catapulted right inside what Maurice Samuel once called "the world of Sholem Aleichem."

But even where there is generous over-all access there can be problems and irritations. Especially with Sholem Aleichem, tone is everything. Halkin's work, stemming, perhaps, from his frank belief in "untranslatabilities," is too often jarred by sudden clangs that do violence to both tongues and result in startling distractions in the English while derailing our expectations of the Yiddish. Either we are in Sholem Aleichem's milieu or we are not—that is the crux. To transmute Sholem Aleichem's easy, idiomatic language into familiar slang is not necessarily a bad or inept solution; it requires of the translator a facile and supple ear, alert to the equation of idioms in two cultures. And it isn't that Hillel Halkin lacks such an ear—just the opposite. What he lacks, I am afraid, is an instinct for what is apropos. American street talk is preposterous in the mouths of people in a forest outside Yehupetz on the way to Boiberik, and the more skillfully and lavishly these relaxed Americanisms



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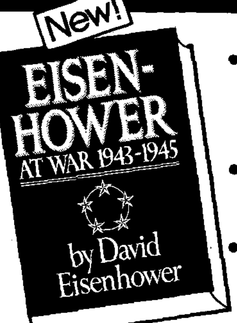

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are deployed, the more preposterous they seem. "He looks at me like the dumb bunny he is," "I blew in this morning," "It drives me up the wall," "Holy suffering catfish!"—absurd locutions for poor Jews in a Russian railway carriage at the turn of the century, especially in the company of the occasional British "Quite" and a stilted "A black plague take them all" (a stock imprecation that in Yiddish stings without sounding rococo). And what are we to do with a Tevye who is "bushed," who downs his brandy with "Cheers!" (even "Fiddler" stuck by *l'khayim!*"), who tells someone "You're off your trolley"? With ripe improbability, the Jews on the train say "the gospel truth," "a federal case," "Doesn't that beat all for lowdownness," "Tried to pin such a bum rap on me," "You're all bollixed up," "Some meatball he was," and, painfully, for dancing, "Everyone cut the rug up." Somewhere there is an agonizing nineteen-forties "swell." Under such an assault, tone collapses and imagination dies.

But these are phrases snatched out of context. Here is a bit of dialogue between Tevye and his daughter Chava concerning Chvedka, the young Gentile she will eventually run off with:

> "Well, then," I say, "what sort of person is he? Perhaps you could enlighten me."
>
> "Even if I told you," she says, "you wouldn't understand. Chvedka is a second Gorky."
>
> "A second Gorky?" I say. "And who, pray tell, was the first?"
>
> "Gorky," she says, "is only just about the most important man alive."
>
> "Is he?" I say. "And just where does he live, this Mr. Important of yours? What's his act and what makes him such a big deal?"

In the Yiddish, Tevye's bitterness is less elaborately spoken, and is effectively more cutting. Instead of "Perhaps you could enlighten me," Tevye comes back with a curt "Let's hear," all the more biting for its brevity. "Pray tell," absent in the original, is too fancy; Tevye grunts out his sardonic helplessness in a single fricative, a *zhe* attached to the sentence's opening word. This *zhe*, in no way portable into English, is nonetheless rawly expressive, and deserves better than the tinkle of Halkin's "Pray tell." But the real blow to Tevye's language (and his moral cosmos) is struck in the last line, which, in the light of the Yiddish original, is insupportably charmless and hollow—lingo far too carelessly parochial to reflect Tevye's sufferings in a Pharaonic Russia. Agreed, the original is intimidating: "*Vu zitst er, der tane dayner, vos iz zayn gesheft un vos far a droshe hot er gedroshnt?*"—literally, "Where does he sit, that *tane* of yours, how does he get his living, and what kind of a *droshe* has he preached?" A *tane* is one of the classical scholastics known as *tannaim*, whose hermeneutics appear in the Mishnah, a collection of sixty-three tractates of law and ethics that constitute the foundation of the Talmud; a *droshe* is a commentary, often formidably allusive, prepared by a serious student of homiletics. For Tevye to compare a Russian peasant boy, whose father he judges to be a swineherd and a drunk, with the most influential sages of antiquity is bruising sarcasm—and not only because Chvedka's family outlook is so remote from the impassioned patrimony of Jewish learning.

More appositely, Tevye is making the point that the Gorky he has never heard of stands as a mote in relation to that patrimony. From Tevye's perspective—and his perspective always includes historical memory, with its emphasis on survival and continuity—Chava, in pursuing Chvedka, is venturing into the transgressions of spiritual self-erasure; Tevye is altogether untouched by that cosmopolitan Western liberalism which will overwhelmingly claim his deracinated descendants. In half a moment, the dialogue has moved from the joke of "a second Gorky" to the outcry of a crumbling tradition wherein a secular Russian author is starting to assume major cultural authority for Jews. However difficult it may be for a translator t convey all this—so complex and hurtful a knot of social and emotional attitudes ingeniously trapped in a few Yiddish syllables—it is certain tha Halkin's "this Mr. Important o yours," with its echoes of old radi programs (Molly Goldberg, Fred Allen's Mrs. Nussbaum), does not nearl achieve a solution.

Even so, given its strengths Halkin's work is likely to serve as th indispensable Sholem Aleichem fo some time to come.

—CYNTHIA OZIC

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CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Albion* (*Mich.*) *Recorder*]

A breaking and entering was reporte Monday at 2:30 a.m. on the 100 block Sycamore. An ADPS investigation reveale that a bath towel was the suspect.

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